'WONDER' HEALERS OF THE PHILIPPINES

A FRANK AND CONTROVERSIAL REPORT ON PSYCHIC SURGERY. CAN FILIPINO MEDIUMS PERFORM BARE-HAND, PAINLESS AND SCARLESS OPERATIONS? IF SO, HOW ARE THEY ACHIEVED? YOU ARE THE JUDGE

HAROLD SHERMAN

THIS provocative book is destined to become one of the most controversial accounts of spirit healing ever written. Harold Sherman, a highly competent psychic researcher, has personally investigated claims that Filipino mediums are able to perform bare-hand "operations" on patients. They feel no pain. Little blood is spilt. No scar is left. And the patient recovers.

Astonishing? Unbelievable? That is what Sherman thought. But so persistent were reports from observers and patients that he went to the Philippines to study psychic surgery. He takes his reader, stage by stage, on this fascinating psychic adventure.

Antonio Agpaoa, a young healer with a growing reputation, was the pivot of Sherman's research. But the author also saw a number of other "surgeons" who use similar healing methods.

Sherman and his colleagues are convinced they saw fraud and self-delusion. But they also witnessed phenomena which could not be explained away. His detailed report contains testimonies from doctors, scientists and cured patients. He leaves you to be the judge.

Harold Sherman has devoted a major part of his life to the study of extrasensory perception and allied psychic topics. He is president and executive director of the ESP Research Associates Foundation, Little Rock, Arkansas, USA. Moreover, he has given evidence of possessing remarkable ESP powers.

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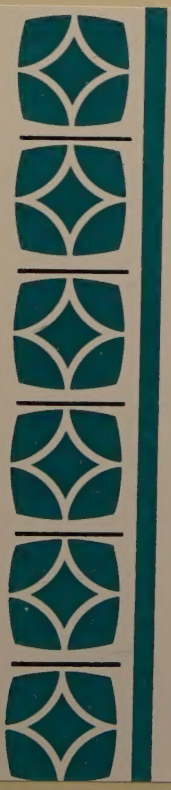

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WITHDRAWN

"WONDER" HEALERS OF THE PHILIPPINES

"WONDER" HEALERS OF THE PHILIPPINES

by

HAROLD SHERMAN

President and Executive Director

ESP Research Associates Foundation

Arkansas, U.S.A.

PSYCHIC PRESS LTD.

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This book is dedicated to the search for TRUTH, whatever this TRUTH may eventually be determined to be, through further scientific investigation and research.

—HAROLD SHERMAN

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FOREWORD

IN A BARE, LITTLE ROOM at the back of a plain, one-storey house with high-beamed ceilings, on the outskirts of Quezon City, near Manila, in the Philippines, is a home-made, unpainted wooden table. It has a surface of slats, some of which are broken. This table is covered by a torn piece of white oil cloth. But on it are performed daily what appear to be major operations. The "surgeon" is a twenty-seven-year-old, well-proportioned, self-assured, brown-skinned little man. He makes incisions, does whatever surgery is required, and then closes the openings he has made in the bodies—*all with his bare hands!*

Not only that. The surgery is usually performed in five to ten minutes, without pain to the unanaesthetised, fully-awake patient. *And the operation leaves no trace of a scar!*

Impossible, you say? Incredible? An illusion? Many have thought this until they have seen for themselves. Most of them then look on in awe and depart, shaking their heads in utter mystification.

"It shouldn't happen, but it *does!*" one man said. "I feel as though I have been in the presence of God," said another.

"I saw it with my own eyes," said yet another. "He even let me touch the insides of this woman, through the incision in her abdomen. And I still don't believe it!"

"What can I say? I think he is the greatest healer since Christ. Didn't Jesus tell us there will be those who will do even greater works than he? Maybe Tony is one such man!"

These are just a few of countless comments and reactions. But what of the patients? What do they *think* and how do they *feel* about him?

"Tony? . . . Antonio Agpaoa? . . . He is a man of God—the wonder healer of the age!"

"See my nose? He opened it up. Took out polyps! Now I can breathe freely. You cannot see where he operated. No?"

"I was almost blind and he removed cataracts from my eyes —just with his hands. Now I can read without glasses!"

"He took a tumour from my intestines, in less than five minutes! I felt no pain—nothing—and I am well now. Went back to work right away."

"My heart! It was a blood clot. He opened up my chest—cut through the ribs with his bare hands, took the heart in his hands and removed the clot with his fingers! All the time I was conscious, feeling no pain, and my heart beating in his hand! Oh, I tell you, it's the healing power of God in him. It has to be. For me to be alive and well is a miracle—the greatest!"

These kinds of testimonies can be heard any day at Antonio Agpaoa's home, where there is a constant day and night procession of cured patients and those seeking healings—men, women and children of all ages, the high, the low, the rich, the poor. Tony makes no distinction whatsoever and there is never any charge. He does not check their bank account before operating. He will accept what they offer, whether it be a few centavos or pesos—it is all the same to him—because Tony's "Protector," as he calls this God-like power that he says is operating through him, is apparently "running the show." Healing help is freely given to all, regardless of economic status, colour, religion or station in life.

In January, 1966, I spent three weeks in the Philippines, in the company of William Henry Belk, a prominent United States businessman, and Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, a Japanese scientist, making a study of the purported "bare hand psychic surgery" operations of Tony Agpaoa and others proclaimed "wonder" healers.

Just preceding us, Robert Swope, an astro-physicist associated with the Department of Bio-Astronautics, Manned Space Vehicles Division, Aero-Space Corporation, Los Angeles, and Dr. Nelson Decker, a chiropractor, had spent a week to ten days making a study of their own and taking motion pictures.

Later, Belk, Dr. Motoyama and I were joined by Dr. Seymour S. Wanderman, renowned physician and cancer and arthritic research specialist, from New York. All of us witnessed a variety of operations and had individual reactions, as might be expected, from the standpoint of our different backgrounds, to what we saw and experienced.

Many people claim: "These 'Wonder' Healers are manifesting a power that must be classified as supernormal. No other explanation is possible."

Bob Swope, after seeing Tony Agpaoa's work, said to me: "Harold, this is the rare white crow for which science has been looking. And if we prove the existence of one white crow, we know, beyond scientific doubt, there have to be other white crows. What I have seen and photographed is beyond words. Before I came here, I would not have believed, as a scientist, that I would ever change my concepts, would ever go against my schooling and training in admitting that powers, such as I have witnessed functioning through Tony, *could* exist.

"Now I know a new world of fantastic possibilities has been opened up, and I don't give a damn what fellow-scientists say when I show these pictures and give my report. I'm prepared to face ridicule and scepticism because I know what Tony is doing is genuine, even though I don't pretend to understand how he does it—or what this power is, at present."

On the contrary, my friend, Dr. Wanderman, who could only spend three days in the Philippines viewing Tony's work and who did not see, unfortunately, a wide range of his operations, came away with a totally different impression:

"I do not believe Tony opens and closes physical bodies. I believe he is a conjurer or a magician. He pulls a lamb's membrane over the abdomen, for example, and saturates it with a liquid that looks like blood. I feel it is impossible to enter the body without a knife and the times he *does* open the body, I believe he uses a concealed razor blade. His operations, in any case, are crude and primitive. You can't tell me he performs them without patients contracting infection, since he observes no sanitary methods. A great percentage of Filipinos already

have syphilis and Tony is risking serious contagion in handling them the way he does. I saw nothing that cannot be explained as medical legerdemain. I'm sorry to have to give this negative report but this is just as I saw it."

Take your choice. The opposing opinion is that of a doctor who did not hesitate to take an out-and-out stand. Following an "abdominal operation," Tony offered Dr. Wanderman an opportunity to examine a tumour allegedly taken from the body of a woman patient, along with a sample of her blood, both of which he refused. Dr. Wanderman said he did not need to examine them. He could tell at a glance the specimen was some days old, and the blood was not real blood. Colour motion pictures were taken of this operation with Dr.Wanderman and myself both visible on film.

This story, then, will be a story of contradiction, of widely differing interpretations, of conflicting ideas and, at times, clashing personalities—but a story, nevertheless, of possibly monumental implications as to the nature of still unknown powers both within and without man's body and mind. It is a story that will take an entire book to tell.

Since there has to be a beginning—although my mind is filled with so many scenes I would like to convey to you at once—we had best start at the point where this all began for me. See and feel what has happened in the order in which I experienced it—because I now find myself to have become, unwittingly, part of a mounting human drama. I am left with the feeling that we are not even well into the first act of what is yet to happen or be discovered!

Nor is the research more than just started. There is much we do not understand about the work of these so-called "wonder" healers, most of whom are members of the Union of Christian Spiritists, known as the Espiritista. Their variety of reported healings remains to be investigated in depth by top scientists and prominent members of the medical profession. Many more patients must be checked, taking into account their past medical history, the physical conditions existing at the time of treatment or operation, a pathological analysis of all organs and

tissues purportedly removed, and a study made of the degree of recovery following whatever is done to them.

Let it be said at the outset, Belk and I have observed and detected fraud, conscious and unconscious; sleight-of-hand or magic; self-hallucinated manifestations and "spirit" messages, and extreme gullibility in the face of spiritual deception. But, with it all, we have looked upon what appeared to have been genuine phenomena, inexplicable by our established standards and practices of medicine and modern science.

It is this area of what has been termed "psychic surgery," the alleged ability of some healers to perform major operations with their bare hands, to open and close physical bodies, usually leaving no scar, which has challenged our attention, our very concepts of what can and cannot be done.

My function must essentially be that of a *reporter*, although I have also acted as observer and investigator. *But I am not a doctor. I am not a surgeon. I am not a scientist.* I have, however, mainly devoted the last forty years of my life to the study of what is today called extra-sensory perception.

As president and executive director of the ESP Research Associates Foundation, Little Rock, Arkansas, it is my intention, as resources will allow, to map and carry out, in association with scientists and doctors, men and women of unquestioned integrity, ability and experience, a series of experiments and investigations and researches aimed at solving, if possible, many of the current mysteries of the mind.

It is to be hoped that it can be determined, in due course, how the mind of man operates; how it may relate to the electro-magnetic and extra-terrestrial energies, functioning in and around man, and how these energies may affect man's physical and mental faculties.

In any event, the quest for this knowledge is under way. As this is being written, the ESP Research Associates Foundation is planning a research expedition to the Philippines comprised of a group of distinguished doctors, surgeons and scientists, with sufficient instrumentation and facilities to bring back a comprehensive and conclusive report covering every phase of "psychic

surgery." It could well take a second book to adequately report it.

You are now invited to join in this exploration as I present the story as it has occurred so far—with the facts as they have been discerned. They are being presented, as you will observe, without fear or favour. But, until more is known and has been proved by competent authorities, *no individual seeking a restoration of health should go to the Philippines and submit to any treatment or operation, regardless of the cases and experiences reported herein.*

There is only one requisite for a true scientific investigator or researcher—you must maintain, at all times, an open mind.

CHAPTER ONE

START OF A GREAT SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE

WHEN I FIRST LEARNED, early in 1960, of the "psychic surgery" taking place in the Philippines, wherein native Filipinos, under some sort of spiritual influence, were reported to be performing major operations with their bare hands. I scoffed at it.

Accounts of these phenomena were first published in *Chimes*, a Spiritualist publication, and in *Fate* magazine. The articles were written by two world travellers and explorers, Ron Ormond and Ormond McGill. They had been around the globe in search of the weird and the fantastic in many lands, particularly in relation to strange religious rites, ceremonies and practices.

Strangest of all was their report of "amazing seances in the Philippines—a psychic surgeon, named Eleuterio Terte, who could remove growths from patients, often without incision, always without pain, and without leaving a scar!

"Sometimes, the removal seems to be a direct apport in which the organ will suddenly appear in the fingers of the medium," Ormond and McGill stated. "Other times, a wound in the human body is caused to open large enough to insert the hand in order to remove such diseased parts as tumours, cancer tissues, gall stones, appendices, fatty tissue, and so on. After the operation, the wound closes, leaving not so much as a scratch. And there is no pain; the patient simply goes on his way, relieved of the disease completely."

How could such a phenomenon be possible? It was in defiance of all medical knowledge and practice. Had I not been trained to keep an open-minded attitude in the investigation of all

phases of alleged extra-sensory perception, I would probably have denounced the Ormond-McGill account of "psychic surgery" as most doctors and scientists have done—dismissing it as delusion, self-hallucination, figments of the imagination, hypnotic influence, the work of a clever conjurer or magician, or just out-and-out fraud.

But as I read further and studied photographs that had been taken of Terte's operations, and learned that this man had the support of prominent people in the Philippines, I began to wonder.

Guillermo Tolentino, for example, is famed as the "Michelangelo of the Philippines." He is a noted sculptor, vice-president of the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipina, bearing a similarity to the Christian Spiritualist movement, and a defender of Terte and the work of other mediums or healers, all members of the Spiritist Society, numbering thousands upon thousands of members throughout the Islands, with over 400 centres. Why would this man risk his fine reputation in upholding a fraud or a hoax? What would he have to gain since no charge is made for these healing and operative services? It is strictly prohibited by the union's by-laws.

"Since 1948," Tolentino was quoted as saying, "patients from all walks of life, and many from abroad, have flocked to the Philippines for treatment. Many others have benefited from absent healing. Our mission is solely humanitarian. The mediums responsible for these remarkable operations are unlearned and ignorant by educational standards. Yet, when entranced, they can perform the unbelievable. Through their lips, the Holy Spirit delivers scientific, philosophical, prophetic, moral and spiritual teachings that no theologians or preachers in the flesh can equal."

"The Holy Spirit!" This interpretation disturbed me. I have great respect and regard for a higher power in man, an intelligent force beyond ordinary mental capacity, which manifests itself on occasion, but to designate it in religious terminology seemed too limiting and sectarian. Yet, on reflection, how else are we going to find words to describe phenomena obviously

functioning beyond the five physical senses except to credit them to a God-like power?

My next question, as I studied the Ormond-McGill report, was, "If there is any truth in it, why has not medical science recognised it?" Came the answer in the next paragraph:

"Naturally, the Filipino medical profession is sceptical of such claims, but its investigation is welcomed. For just this purpose, Guillermo Tolentino has preserved, in jars of alcohol, many of the diseased parts as they were removed. They are there, on shelves, in his home, 2012 Retiro Street, Sampaloc, Manila, for anyone to see, as proof of the efficiency of the process!"

> [Note: Since reading the above, I have been in the Philippines. I have met Tolentino, been in his home, seen Terte operate, and I have also seen additions made to these jars of preserved parts. But so far as can be determined, there were no pathological tests.]

The original article by Ormond and McGill went on to tell about the "spirit messages" purportedly received by Tolentino, mysteriously written on tiny visiting cards, embedded in the meat of unopened mangostan nuts. These messages were in the native language of Tagalog, supposedly in the handwriting of the departed, and dropped out of the air in the midst of seances, sometimes in broad daylight.

Tolentino was said to have hundreds of these "message-bearing apports" on exhibit, written in microscopic handwriting, requiring a magnifying glass to read. Some of these communications allegedly came from "our Lord Jesus, the Virgin Mary, St. Augustine, St. Luke, St. Matthew, St. Ann, St. Vincent, St. John the Baptist, St. Gerome, and many others."

This was too much for me. I had about decided to "leave the jury out" on the report of "psychic surgery," but to accept, as factual, the "nut-contained messages" from deceased loved ones and the entire assemblage of apostles and saints, headed by Christ himself, was something impossible to swallow.

"Ormond and McGill must be slightly nuts themselves to be taken in to this extent," was my conclusion.

A year or more later, my wife and I found ourselves in Los Angeles, for an indefinite stay, where I have often gone for lectures and radio and TV appearances, in connection with newly-published books of mine. While there we received a notice that Ron Ormond and Ormond McGill were showing motion pictures of their "psychic travels" including scenes taken of "Eleuterio Terte, strange healer of San Fabian, performing his bare hand operations on patients."

This recalled to mind the article we had read, and I suggested to my wife that we attend. "There's probably nothing much to it," I said, "but I feel it's worth looking into, to this extent, anyway."

The hall where the showing was held was none too auspicious. The audience represented, to us, for the most part, a fringe element of metaphysical adherents, gullible men and women, wishful thinkers, disposed to accept anything, however "far out." We met Ron Ormond and Ormond McGill and liked them both, personally. They seemed sincere and actually assured us they had filmed genuine phenomena. However, the atmosphere was too seemingly theatrical, with an admixture of magic. Ormond McGill was a practising hypnotist and magician.

The pictures of Terte's operations looked as though they could have been tricked. They left much to be desired for analytical and evaluating purposes, at any rate, and Martha and I came away still unconvinced. "Psychic surgery may or may not be true," I remember saying, "but you cannot prove it one way or the other by what we saw tonight."

In 1963, J. Bernard Ricks, an American medium from Shreveport, Louisiana, made the 8,000-mile trip to the Philippines to visit the little village of San Fabian, and witness "Brother Terte" operate. He reported his experiences in *Fate* magazine. I read the account, this time, with growing interest. It coincided in the main with the Ormond-McGill article.

Ricks, whoever, went further. He described several operations:

"The first operation that I witnessed in San Fabian was surgery to remove what was said to be a blood clot in the non-circulatory part of the heart. The patient was a middle-aged man, a United States citizen. He is still an active and prominent Californian businessman. I am not at liberty to reveal his name.

"The operation took place in a hut just like the others that line the road into the village of 400. The patient was placed on a simple table and a small group of women gathered at the patient's feet.

"Terte called forth a woman trance medium. He first put his hand on her forehead, then he clapped his hands, and she instantly went into a deep trance. The other women lifted the entranced medium into a chair and put a handkerchief over her face. I was told that the presence of this entranced medium 'gains power' for the surgeon.

"As soon as the medium was seated, the remaining women started to sing the hymns that Terte and his followers believe are necessary for the production of phenomena. The songs that I recognised were sung in English and some in native Tagalog. The function of this choir is to combine their voices in song to 'stir up the vibrations' and enable the healer and patient to achieve better harmony, one with the other. As the choir continued its gentle melodies, Terte took his place at the right side of the operating table and I took my position on the other side, watching him across the quiet form of the hopeful patient.

"As the choir sang, Terte recited the Lord's Prayer in English and Tagalog. He held out his arms with his fingers pointed straight at the patient's chest. Suddenly, as if in response to an unseen signal, his arms dropped and he began to massage the patient's chest in the area of the heart. The massage was only a gentle kneading, performed with just the tips of his fingers.

"Within ten seconds of Terte's fingers touching the patient, I could see a small black object coming right up through the man's chest—it was a blood clot! There was no opening in the chest, but the clot came up and fell right out into Terte's hands.

It was about the size of my thumbnail and was very bloody, but there was no blood on the patient's body.

"I spoke to the patient as he lay on the operating table and he was able to reply instantly. He said that he felt no pain, but claimed to 'feel inside' that the clot was gone. He later told me that his doctors back in the States had advised an operation to correct his condition, but that he had chosen psychic surgery . . .

"Terte operates only when *spirits* inform him they will be ready, then he handles a number of cases within a relatively short time. . . . I saw quite a number of operations after this. At no time during any of them did the patient show any sign of pain. . . . I know these operations were real. I was there, I handled the tissues removed from the patients, I smelled the decay of diseased organs, I saw the flesh that was instantaneously healed. I cannot explain what I have seen, although I feel there is an explanation for this somewhere.

"I have seen enough to know that Terte is doing a good work that brings peace into thousands of lives. I am told that more than a thousand persons often seek him out at a weekend. I know there were at least a hundred seeking treatment at San Fabian when I was there.

"Although we cannot explain Terte's methods, I understand he, himself, has been able to teach his techniques of psychic surgery to some twenty other healers. He is interested in helping still more master his art. . . .

"I, myself, think, as a clairvoyant, that the entire operation is done by spirit entities, as Terte was not in trance at any time during the operations I witnessed. His fingers, of course, are controlled by the spirit to perform certain necessary physical actions. . . .

"These psychic operations are conducted at services of the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas, which now claims millions of members. They believe that their Spiritism is a way of life and not a religion, thus they continue to profess membership in the Roman Catholic Church."

What was I to think after reading this? Different observers at different times were in general agreement on what they had

seen. So far it was all about Terte, though other healers were mentioned as active on behalf of the same Spiritist organisation. Was this all illusion? Did hypnotism play a part? Could patient after patient be fooled into thinking he had been operated upon, when he had not? How can one account for the diseased organs and tissues, put in bottles and labelled, for evidence? All fakes? Taken from animals and palmed? The blood: phoney—artificial, too? Pretty elaborate system to employ with observers crowding around on every side of the operating table. Admittedly, there is no easy, obvious explanation.

"I believe I would have to see this for myself," I said to Martha, "before I could hazard a guess or an opinion as to just what *is* taking place. And maybe even then I couldn't say."

How prophetic this statement later turned out to be!

In January, 1965, a feature story in the *Daily Bulletin*, a Philippines newspaper, was called to my attention. It bore the heading:

CALIFORNIAN PROBES REPORT ON A PANGASINAN "HEALER"; CONVINCED THAT "IT'S TRUE"

The lead paragraphs read as follows:

A 66-year-old veteran of the Philippine liberation compaign, who returned here all the way from California to investigate the reported "mystic healings" in Pangasinan, has come to a definite conclusion. He is entirely convinced of the veracity of the report—**after having, himself, been successfully healed.**

Francis Martin Hamilton of Banning, California, came here last January 4, with failing eyesight and had both his eyes operated on for cataract extraction.

"I can see now very well after the operation which I consider no less than a miracle," Hamilton said in an interview at the *Bulletin* office. "As a matter of fact, my eyesight keeps improving every day. I may have to discard my eyeglasses which cost me $80 in the States."

The operation which he said would have cost him easily over $1,000 (about £334) in America, **cost him nothing here.**

"I was giving the man P1,000 (about £90), but he was so

surprised, he backed out," Hamilton said. "His companion later told me that I insulted the man by offering the money, so I went to him and apologised."

Hamilton said surgery in the United States would have also entailed at least a week's stay in the hospital, **while here he was allowed to leave after staying a total of less than two minutes on the operating table for both eyes.**

The operation, which was painless and made without instruments, had another effect upon Hamilton; he has now returned to religion.

"I was an altar boy in a Roman Catholic School in St. Louis, Missouri, but when I got a job at seventeen, I forgot all about religion. Now I'm reading the Bible which I never did before . . ."

Hamilton said it was ironic that Filipinos should learn about something extraordinary happening in their midst from people abroad. He said this was something he could not understand.

"I travelled 8,000 miles just to investigate and see for myself if these reports are true. I am leaving here convinced that they are really true. **You people have been here all the time and you let others investigate for you."**

Concluding the interview, Hamilton said: "I have nothing to gain in reporting this to the newspapers. I am retired and don't belong to any organisation. I have enough for my retirement and I have two cars. **All I want is for the public to know the truth about the wonderful thing happening in your country. I am, of course, grateful to your countrymen for having treated me."**

Hamilton was a chief petty officer on the U.S. Warship Mississippi during the Philippine liberation campaign of 1944. He is going back to California in about a week to join his family in their farm home in Banning. Before leaving, however, now that he has recovered his eyesight, he wants to do some sightseeing, especially to see Corregidor, which he said reminded him of his service in the last war.

More evidence—and still more about the amazing operative feats of one Eleuterio Terte! I was being hit hard from a number of independent sources. But more was yet to come.

On March 21, 1965, Meyer Kronenberg, prominent business-

man of Miami Beach, arrived in the Philippines to investigate spirit healing and psychic surgery at the request of his friend, William Henry Belk, head of the Belk Psychic Research Foundation. He had wanted to observe the famous Eleuterio Terte, of the Spiritist group, who used religious methods to heal, but Terte's daughter had just died and Kronenberg could not arrange a meeting. The trip would have been a disappointment had he not accidentally met Nelson C. Decker, of San Clemente, California, a chiropractor who had come to the Islands to study this form of healing. Decker mentioned that he knew of a healer who used scientific methods instead of the religious ceremonies employed by the Spiritists. "Take me to him," requested Kronenberg.

The account of this meeting was contained in another article in *Fate* magazine on information supplied by Henry Belk, who had reported it to me long before publication. Here it is, in essence:

> The two men, Kronenberg and Decker, arrived at the clinic of Antonio Agpaoa, affectionately called "Dr. Tony" by his patients. When they reached the second floor of the small building, they found the rooms crowded with persons of all ages, waiting hopefully for a cure. After a few minutes, Tony appeared in the door of his little operating room, walked out and pointed to an elderly woman, indicating it was her turn. There was no schedule. He simply chose at random, performing an operation about once an hour.
>
> The woman was not frightened. Like all those waiting that day, she had confidence in "Dr. Tony."
>
> The operation took five minutes.
>
> "I tell you frankly," says Kronenberg, "I was emotionally disturbed to the extent that I had difficulty sleeping that night. The man opened up the abdomen with his bare hands. I saw what I would call a miracle."
>
> This was not easy for the 60-year-old man to say. He was a businessman, educated, and necessarily objective. But he could find no other explanation.
>
> "Tony's explanation was simple. He said that he has supernatural powers of which he has been aware since the age of nine.

It is nothing that he does on his own; the powers are just projecting themselves through him.

"Unlike the Spiritist healers, Tony has no religious background (although he is a professed Roman Catholic). Terte's group are all of Catholic persuasion with this Spiritist affiliation added. There is a certain degree of animosity between Tony's admirers and the members of Terte's organisation. The latter feel that Tony should be one of them, that he should not be operating on his own. But Tony's attitude is strictly scientific. He is spiritual without being religious in any ceremonial sense. I spent the day observing him and was more and more amazed at what I witnessed.

"The patients are completely conscious, not even hypnotised. I talked to them as they were being operated on and asked them questions. For a while I thought maybe I was the one who had been hypnotised. I pinched myself once or twice to see if it was really happening before my eyes. I was wide awake, as alert as I am right at this moment. There's no doubt about it—it's an absolute fact.

"Patients are coming and going all day long. Most of them are obviously very poor. Tony does not charge, but he will accept donations. Many pay him nothing, but they are deeply grateful. He is kind and sympathetic with them all and speaks to each of them in their native tongue, although quite a few can speak some English.

"Why patients feel no pain is more than I can understand, and there is no sanitation. There should be infection, but I am told there has been none, in all the years Tony has been operating. It's all beyond me!

"This man is no quack. I asked Tony if he would be willing to visit the United States and demonstrate his powers before medical and scientific groups. He said he would. I then inquired if he had experienced any or much difficulty with the medical profession. He admitted there were objections from time to time but never any complaints from patients. In fact, he said some high officials, such as judges, mayors and governors of provinces, even some doctors and surgeons, had come to him to be given treatment, either for themselves, or relatives and friends."

Meyer Kronenberg, when he returned to Miami Beach, reported at once to Henry Belk, urging him to get to the Philippines as quickly as possible, assuring Belk that the trip would be well worth his while.

"If I had not seen it, I would not have believed it," said Kronenberg. "And you'll have to see it to believe it. Almost anyone will, until sufficient medical and scientific research can be done to substantiate these operations beyond any possibility of doubt. I'm telling you, Henry, I could not be more astounded, as I think back on what I saw and experienced, if a man from outer space should land in my back yard!"

The date was now early in April, 1965, and Henry Belk could not arrange to fly to the Philippines to see Tony until June. Meanwhile Nelson Decker, who had spent about four months in the Philippines, first with Terte and other healers associated with Professor Tolentino's Espiritista group, and then with Tony, returned to California, hopeful that he could somehow raise the money to bring Tony over to the States.

The method Decker undertook to employ, however, was foolhardy, a fact he later came to recognise. It was his belief that, through lectures and through publicity in the *Cosmic Star*, a psychic publication (now renamed *New Age World*), he could sign up a hundred patients to be operated on by Tony upon his arrival in the States, at $100 (about £35) an operation. This would produce a total of $10,000, a sufficient amount to pay Tony's travel expenses and the costs of his stay in the States, with enough left over as a fee for his services.

Tony had not agreed to any such project, although he had indicated an interest in coming to the United States at some future time, under the right auspices.

The *Cosmic Star*, however, carried this heading over a story by-lined by Nelson Decker:

TONY AGPAOA TO
VISIT DISNEYLAND

As the *Cosmic Star* goes to press, Tony Agpaoa is expected to arrive here in Los Angeles for a personal visit to me, in

return for his wonderful hospitality to me in the Philippines earlier this year.

This veteran psychic healer, at the age of 26, like all other visitors to the U.S., will spend a day at Disneyland, visit Arizona and Old Mexico. Plans are in the making for a small reception of prominent New Agers who have the same interest in a Philippine hospital Tony is planning.

Land has already been donated in Quezon City (the capital) and Tony would like to start a clinic in which plastic surgery and eye transplants can be performed. These particular conditions require some days for complete healing and an eye bank is necessary as a part of the equipment.

In this spiritual healer's operations, usually four to five minutes is required to remove kidney or gallstones, and five to ten minutes for growths and appendix. Naturally the more complicated ones, such as heart surgery, deafness, cataracts and the like, take fifteen to sixty minutes to complete. I will have more pictures and a more detailed story to tell in future issues of the *Cosmic Star*.

Needless to say, despite this announcement, Tony did not arrive in the States. It should have been obvious from the start that American medical laws would not permit Tony's entrance on a number of counts. He has had no medical training, he is not a doctor, he has no licence to practice, he does not observe our sanitary methods and he operates without instruments. For him to attempt to perform his "psychic surgery" in this country would land him promptly in jail, and Decker along with him as his accomplice. To spirit him to Mexico and to try to bootleg operations across the border would also lead to certain trouble.

Regardless of all these restrictions, which would have placed Tony Agpaoa in immediate jeopardy, many desperately ill people wrote to Decker, volunteering to sign up for operations, only too glad to pay this modest $100 fee, in the hope of regaining their health. Others were eager to go to the Philippines so that Tony could attend to their physical needs there.

It was June, 1965, and Henry Belk had now arrived in the Philippines to witness Antonio Agpaoa's healing work in

particular and all other healers in general. He lost no time in calling upon Guillermo Tolentino, acting head of the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipina, and making known his desire to learn all he could about faith and spirit healing in the Islands. Tolentino graciously volunteered to put Belk in touch with his organisation's most outstanding mediums, men like the highly publicised Eleuterio Terte, and the almost as famous Jose Mercado, as well as Juan Blanche, and Nellie, the girl medium whose telepathic healings were being sought by patients who had no means to come to the Philippines.

When Belk asked Tolentino about Tony, he was told that Tony was not now a member of the Espiritista; that, in their opinion, he had commercialised his healing powers, which was against the union's rules, and that they did not approve of his methods. It was admitted that Tony possessed unusual powers, but Tolentino predicted he would lose them or come under bad spirit influences if he continued as he was now doing. According to Tolentino, it was necessary to preach and to teach from the Bible for hours, accompanied by hymn-singing and message-giving, before any operations could be performed. Tony was criticised for not doing this. Instead, he did his meditation and praying at night, so he would be free during the day to give relief to those needing treatment and psychic surgery. This was not right. He should be showing more devotion to God in public worship and he should not accept money, even donations, for his healing gift.

The reaction of Tolentino and his group towards Tony did not dissuade Belk from getting in touch with this "independent operator." He regarded their attitudes and differences as largely intramural and of no basic consequence, since each was credited with genuine performance of psychic surgery. Belk, therefore, laid out his one-man-programme of investigation, observing all he could, where he could, taking photographs and interviewing patients as well as healers.

Eventually, all that was happening on both sides of the Pacific was to have its repercussions upon me. I was then in Los Angeles. On August 12, I received a telephone call from

my physicist friend, Robert Swope, whom I had met through fellow-members of the Southern California branch of the American Society for Psychical Research. Bob had expressed a desire, the year before, to participate with me in any research my ESP Research Associates Foundation might undertake in a study of astral projection. Through me he had met Robert Allan Monroe, a prominent Charlottesville, Virginia, businessman, whom the foundation had brought to the coast for a public talk on his out-of-the-body experiences. Bob said that science was ready to make an "in depth study" of extra-sensory perception the moment genuine evidence could be presented, indicating the subject was worthy of scientific exploration.

Now Bob was calling to report a most interesting lecture he had attended, presented by a chiropractor named Nelson Decker, at which were shown photographs of some amazing bare-hand operations performed by a native Filipino, Tony Agpaoa. Bob asked me what I knew about Decker and I said, "Very little." He said: "I think we should contact him. I have a feeling he may be in touch with something well worth investigating—something that can possibly be proved. If it can, if this Tony Agpaoa is on the level, then I know we can get all the money needed to do extensive research in ESP."

I told Bob that my friend, Henry Belk, had written that he was going to the Philippines (was perhaps there now) to check on these psychic surgery reports, on the recommendation of his friend, Meyer Kronenberg, who had met Decker while in Manila. It was highly probable that Decker, who had spent some months abroad, had the best knowledge, to date, of psychic activities there.

"See if you can locate Decker," Bob suggested, "and make a date so we can talk to him."

Inquiries determined that Decker lived with his mother in San Clemente, California. I secured his address and wrote him a letter, but he did not reply. A few days later, Bob Swope, who was actively engaged in Bio-Astronautics, with the Manned Space Vehicles Division, Aero-Space Corporation, phoned to ask if I had been able to reach Decker. I said: "No—not yet. But

Martha and I are leaving for our home in the Arkansas Ozarks within a week. Perhaps you can make contact with Decker. If so, and he checks out in your estimation, let me know, and we'll see what can be done."

This was the way it was left.

Now the stage was set, unknown to me, for some explosive happenings. They are all a part of the Tony Agpaoa story. Because of great and growing public interest, they need to be told exactly as they took place so that all possible rumours, mis-statements and misinformation, from whatever sources, may be laid emphatically in the dust.

In reporting these events, I have to be as frank as I am truthful, because what is occurring in the Philippines has become of monumental importance to many desperately ill men and women seeking restoration of health. The hopes of these people must not be falsely or unwarrantedly aroused. For this reason, I feel a profound sense of responsibility in making this "pro and con" report.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BELK STORY ABOUT TONY

In October, 1965, my wife and I motored from our home in the Ozarks to Chicago, where I was to present a lecture on "The Challenge of ESP," under the auspices of the Golden Path, Inc., headed by Irene Hughes. While there we met the Lawrence Herons, whose son, Alfred, an executive with the Esso Standard Oil in Manila, was to play a vital role in the unfolding drama yet to come.

During our intensive week's stay in Chicago, Henry Belk unexpectedly showed up. When he met the Herons, Henry, fresh back from the Philippines, said he was sorry he had not known their son was there, but he certainly would like to meet him, if and when he should return to the Islands.

Busy as I was, with numerous engagements, Henry said he just had to have some time with me to relate what had happened to him in the Philippines. I was equally eager to hear his story.

A little history concerning my past relationship with Henry is now in order. I first heard of him when he invited me, by letter, to become a member of the board of directors of his newly-formed Belk Psychic Research Foundation, then located in New York City. I knew next to nothing about Henry, at the time, but he told me that my two friends, Norman Vincent Peale and Dr. Charles Francis Potter, had accepted memberships on the board and this was good enough recommendation for me. I was enormously interested in giving every encouragement and support to any organisation that was prepared to engage in genuine ESP research.

It was a number of years before I met Belk personally. I was

subsequently to learn that he was the eldest son of the late William Henry Belk, who had been founder of the Belk Department Store chain, consisting today of some four hundred to five hundred stores.

William Henry Belk, Snr., of Charlotte, North Carolina, had been one of the most revered merchants of the South. He had left a highly-honoured and unparalleled record of human service and private and public philanthropies, among them the substantial financing of some 335 Presbyterian churches, foreign missions and hospitals, the W. H. Belk Hall, Davidson College and Belk's Chapel at Queen's College.

His will stipulated that these charitable enterprises would continue and that a goodly share of profits of the Belk Mercantile Corporations would be provided, through foundations, "for the advancement of Christian causes and the upbuilding of mankind." His biography, in characterising the nature and spirit of the man, had this to say: "Anything that smacks of the *unorthodox* is anathema to Henry Belk. He looks back through the years (from the age of 89) to a religious faith and a political system blessed and nourished by the fathers."

Perhaps this explains in part why certain things happened to his namesake, Henry, who succeeded to the managership of the stores following his father's passing in 1952. It was not too many years thereafter that Henry fell upon unhappy times. A graduate of Duke University, he had come under the influence of Dr. J. B. Rhine, world-renowned pioneer investigator of extra-sensory perception. This had caused him to make a study of all religions and philosophies, seeking to determine whether or not there might be a connecting metaphysical link between them. This led to his establishment of the Belk Psychic Research Foundation which naturally did not set well with the traditional, conservative Presbyterian background of the Belk family. Resistance was intensified when Henry brought the then widely-heralded psychic, Peter Hurkos, to the United States, and placed him under tests, as well as making his gifts available in the attempted solving of crimes.

Some of the publicity growing out of this "psychic activity"

proved embarrassing. Henry's four brothers and sister, as well as his mother, became concerned that Henry was not devoting sufficient time and attention to the Belk business enterprises, and took court action to remove him from control and to tie up his interests in the estate.

This was a great mental and emotional shock to Henry, but instead of curbing his interest in ESP it instilled in him a terrific drive and determination to prove to his family and the world that these higher powers of the mind had a spiritual origin, universal in nature, and existed irrespective of any and all religions.

During this trying interval, personal tragedy struck. Henry's beloved little daughter, Mary, aged six, wandered off the family residential grounds, fell in the river and was drowned. Then his wife, Phyllis, divorced him. Henry commuted between apartments in New York City and Miami, trying to reconstruct his life. For a time he did not do very well at it. He was inexpressibly hurt, intensely reactionary, impulsive, unmindful of what he said to others or about others, highly defensive.

It was at this stage of his life that I met Henry. He had been talking in New York to my friend, Charles Potter, who said to him: "Harold Sherman is one of your directors. Have you ever met him?"

"No," said Henry. "Where is he?"

"He lives in Arkansas," said Potter, "but I think he's in Hollywood at present."

Henry picked up the phone and called me. "This is Henry Belk," he said. "I think it's time I was meeting you. I'm catching the first plane out!"

This, I was to learn, was characteristic of Henry. On impulse he would jump on a plane and fly half-way around the world to see an individual or to check even one item in relation to truth.

When he arrived, I saw a tall, slender, highly energetic black-haired man, with steel blue eyes, now bloodshot; a lean, grimly-set jaw, his entire body under high nerve tension. There was something instantly likeable about him, but something, too,

which put you on guard. You had the cautionary impression that you didn't know what he might be going to do next.

"What can I do for you?" I asked. He looked at me. "I don't know," he said. "I just wanted to get acquainted." And with this, he was gone!

From that time on, Henry and I corresponded. He sent me reports on different research trips he made, one of them to Brazil with Dr. Andrija Puharich, to investigate the famed psychic healer, Jose Arigo, whom they witnessed perform operations with an unsterilised kitchen knife, the wounds healing without a scar. On this trip, Henry said Dr. Puharich had permitted Arigo to remove a small tumour from his forearm. Later, on a visit to New York City, I met Dr. Puharich and saw the faintest mark on the skin where the tumour had been.

Henry later dropped in on us for a few days at our Ozark home. Then, in 1963, he asked me to fly to Miami Beach to meet several sensitives he wished me to investigate, including the Virginian businessman, Robert Allan Monroe, who had developed the ability to project himself, at will, astrally.

These were the only times we had been together up to this present meeting in Chicago. But Henry had extended help to me at the time, two years ago, when I had established the ESP Research Associates Foundation, with offices in Little Rock, Arkansas. He said: "You will need this to carry out your work. Perhaps, some day, our two foundations can join up on some real research!"

Relaxed at one late evening session, I could see that Henry was loaded with notes and pictures of his one-man expedition to the Philippines.

"All right," I said. "I've heard a lot about Terte and Tony and the rest of these faith and spirit healers. I don't know what to think, but you've been there. You've seen for yourself. Are they genuine?"

"They're genuine," said Henry. "But there's a lot of hocus-pocus, too."

"That we can expect, any time, anywhere," I said. "This is what has made the investigation of psychic phenomena so

difficult and why many thinking people, encountering fraud or self-delusion, decide that genuine ESP just does not exist."

"I know," said Henry, "but, in my opinion, when we get the full evidence of what is happening in the Philippines, doctors and scientists won't be able to deny it any longer."

When a man is wound up on a subject, there is only one sensible thing to do—if you want to get his story—start him unwinding and get out of the way!

"Fire, when ready!" I said, and started the tape recorder so that I could capture his words.

"I saw Tony the week of June 3, 1965, in Manila and Baguio," began Henry. "I observed his operations on a great number of people from different cities, and talked to his cousin, Alfredo Cruz, Jr., two years older than Tony, and who was brought up with him. I also talked to his attorney friend, Samuel Gines, a former detective, and Tony's wife, who seems to be about twenty. He is the father of a little boy, two years old, and he resides in a two-storey house, which is kept very clean, at 99 Tenth Avenue, Cubao, on the outskirts of Quezon City, Philippines.

"He moved to town about five years ago from the north. He supports himself by contributions from the people he heals. His attorney tells me that he takes in about one hundred a week. I would say that if he was an actual surgeon, the public would pay four or five times as much as what he takes in. His 'Protector' or 'spirit guide' told him that he was to make a living but was not to exploit the public.

"Tony (Antonio Agpaoa) was born on June 2, 1939, one of several children of a Filipino farmer in the village of Rosita. Its population has about five thousand souls, half-way between Manila and Baguio, in the mountains. Tony's mother is now deceased. He would have lived an ordinary life, on the farm, had it not been, at the age of nine, that a spiritual experience came to him in the form of what he calls a 'Protector,' about whom he has been instructed not to say too much.

"This 'Protector' would come, get him out about midnight, keep him out until daybreak, and help prepare his mind so it

could be made a channel for the receiving of healing powers. Tony referred to his 'Protector' as *Tata*, meaning Father in Tagalog, the native language. This invisible 'Protector' is always present, so I understand, at his operations. The story rings a familiar bell with similar events that took place in the Bible.

"Tony's demeanour is very pleasant. He seems to be more intelligent than the average Filipino, despite the fact he has only had a fourth-grade education. He has made a trip around the world, with a wealthy woman who paid his way, and he used his power one time in India. He has quite a large following. In fact, he had to move from the central part of Manila, out to the edge, not even putting a number on his house, to keep from being overwhelmed by requests for healing, mainly from the uneducated poor people. He is kind and a spiritually-evolved person.

"When Tony was about ten, someone took advantage of his innocence by telling him to use his power to find Japanese gold bars they had hidden in the mountains during the war. Tony did this, but his 'Protector' did not like this misuse of his power, so he chastised him by taking away some of his healing ability. At that time, it was said he was able to look at a rose and melt the essence out of it with his eyes. Now he is limited to healing and clairvoyance, and sometimes hears a voice. Nonetheless, his remaining powers are fantastic. He told me that his full powers will be restored to him in about seven years. He does not abuse them. It will be about the year 1973.

"Tony's 'Protector' has told him there will be a big calamity descending on the earth in this period and a lot of Filipinos will be destroyed. I did not pinpoint him down as to whether this would be a natural cataclysm or an atomic war. The Philippines is a volcanic country. Many Filipinos fear an eventual atomic war with Red China. He is rather hesitant to talk about any reference to the 'Protector' and prefers to call it 'the God power' which I think is in good taste. If he mentioned the word 'angel' it would resemble biblical accounts. Anyway, this 'invisible cosmic presence,' whatever it is, must be a powerful entity,

living on another plane of existence, an intelligent being with some plan for mankind.

"I personally witnessed removal of tumours from abdomens and the neck; polyps taken from the nose, sinus operations, removal of eye cataracts. One man had leprosy or some similar disease which had eaten his eye ball and the side of his head out. I was also told that he performs appendicitis operations, treats tuberculosis, lungs, and does brain and heart operations—just about anything that surgery can do today—but did not witness these.

"Tony told me that the most operations and treatments he has done in one day was 317, starting early in the morning and on into the night. I would say that he probably does from ten to twenty operations in an average day. He does not advertise or solicit. People come to him by word of mouth, the majority of whom are illiterate. He does not charge but he does accept donations. Many, however, cannot and do not contribute anything but he treats them just the same."

I broke in to ask him to describe an operating procedure.

"Tony lives in a two-storey house, in the upstairs part. In the front, downstairs, is a living room somewhat like our clinics where prospective patients sit around, usually brought in by some friend or relative. Tony comes out of his little operating room in the rear and interviews them. Then he will bring one of them in and lay the person down on a high bed like an operating table.

"There was one woman who had a tumour, deep in her intestines around the female organs. He will begin to knead this part of the flesh as though he is mixing dough. The next thing you know, blood begins to come out, although he has no knife. Bear in mind that it is physically impossible for a man, even with powerful hands, to tear open the linings of the stomach or intestinal wall, such as he does. They just open up like magic and the flesh rolls back. He sloshes around with the guts, using no antiseptic except sometimes a little bit of alcohol. When he locates the tumour—*bam*—out it comes—still no knife! Then he sloshes around again and before you can blink your eyes,

instantaneously—*bam*—the stomach is healed back up; no scar!"

I looked at Henry with an expression of what must have appeared total disbelief.

"I don't blame you," said Henry. "Even to relate such a fantastic tale, when you are observing it, you feel like you are seeing television—some story about outer space. At times, Tony will put a bandage on the spot, or a piece of adhesive tape. He says, while there is no scar, the inside may not be healed for a couple of days. You think you have been dreaming, but there is the tumour, outside the body on a piece of cotton. He puts it in a bottle of alcohol as 'Exhibit A.' He used to let the patients take these objects home as relics, but his attorney advised him to dispose of them for fear someone might sue him for malpractice, or practising medicine. After he finishes an operation he just goes out and washes his hands. A person like me sits there in a daze, hardly daring to believe what I saw.

"There was one case I noticed, a woman singing, praising God. Most of the patients are semi-illiterate. They get up and walk out, after Tony operates on them, just as if they had been to a prayer meeting. Their bland acceptance of this supernormal performance was just as fascinating to me as the actual operation. To think that these patients don't realise what Tony does to them is really remarkable! This in itself is beyond comprehension. I feel like a nut, but I am reporting it as observable fact. Other operations that I witnessed were very similar except on different parts of the body."

Henry paused for breath. I asked how conditions were in the Philippines, how native Filipinos were able to get to Tony.

"The taxi business, in and out, is very active, bringing people and taking them away. They call the taxis jeepneys. They are jeeps the United States military left in the Philippines after the war and sold to the populace. The Filipinos have put bodies on them and painted them circus colours. They run around the Islands like water bugs, usually jammed with people hanging on the back steps. You hear them honking, telling everyone to get out of the way. The ones that honk the loudest get through

the traffic. Tony's place quite often looks like a small Grand Central Station.

"The race of people seem to have originated in Indo-China, at least their mentalities are about the same. There are lack of roads and sanitary conditions, few rich people, the majority poor. Even the billions of dollars that Americans have dumped on these Islands seem to have had slight effect on their economy, except to restore them from the downfall they had when the Japanese captured the Islands. The Philippines are plagued with bad politics and a lot of thievery. On the surface it looks like a well-governed country. There seems to be a lot of unemployment, and a tendency for the people to drift to the big city of Manila, instead of staying in the country on the farms."

I asked how Tony started his healing work.

"Tony told me that his first healing took place in a rice field. One day a man fell and stabbed himself in the lower abdomen. Tony felt a compulsion to run and put his hand on it. The part was miraculously restored and the hole disappeared. Tony's reputation as a healer spread from that moment. He was only nine at the time. He has never been known to have had a fatality, which is a lot more than many doctors can claim with a much better education. Tony has next to none, certainly not as far as medicine or surgery is concerned.

"Of course I could romanticise this story and make it sound utterly fantastic, or I could give it a religious interpretation, but I am trying to stick purely to facts. After each patient leaves, usually they take a mop and clean up the blood that is left on the oil cloth covering the table, or on the covers they throw over the patient. Sometimes when Tony is sloshing around the wound, the blood will get on your shirt, as it did mine. His assistant in the operation is his cousin, Alfredo Cruz, a very pleasant, very honest, person. He states that he has known Tony all his life and he accepts the miraculous as part of his work."

As Henry paused, I asked for his overall impressions of Tony, now that he had had time to reflect on what he had seen.

"I can say, without reservation, I was very favourably impressed by my experience. I think it was, for one reason, be-

cause there was none of the faith-healing business that exists with some people in our country, with shouting and carrying on—mass hysteria. Tony simply goes to work, after a moment of quiet meditation, opens them up, and does what needs to be done with his bare hands inside the body. Then he closes them up, leaving no scar—and that's about it!

"Tony is very modest after these operations are over. Being a very young man, he doesn't put on the airs of a doctor. At least it is nice to see someone not taking too much credit and being as kind as he is. He speaks good English, but of course with a Filipino accent."

"What about the medical profession?" I asked Henry. "Did you check with them while in the Philippines?"

"Yes, I went to see the Dean of Medicine at the Far Eastern University of Manila and also met the head doctors there. I asked them to investigate so that we would have some correspondence with people in the medical profession on the Island. I have not received a report on their findings so far. I can't understand why they haven't investigated these happenings in depth long ago."

"And what about the other healers, like Terte, Mercado and Blanche, associated with Guillermo Tolentino?"

"I met Tolentino who is head of the big group of Spiritualists on the Islands. They call themselves Spiritists instead of Spiritualists. They make this distinction because they also consider themselves Roman Catholics, which is their religion. I learned that they have at least twenty similar healers who do these kinds of operations, some with lesser and some with different powers.

"It appears that Tolentino's healers do not take money. They offer their services without payment. The fact that Tony takes contributions is not considered too favourably by this union. Personally, I see no harm in Tony accepting donations, because he is certainly entitled to some means of support in view of the good he does these people and the money he saves them in medical expenses.

"As I have stated, in all his operations there is no pain. The

operation takes about five or six minutes, including diagnosis. There is some blood, but Tony says he can control the amount of bleeding. When the operation is completed, I repeat again, there is no scar.

"Of course, the entire thing is beyond any medicine as known today, in 1965. However, I am sure there is some method employed, but the only way it can be described at present is in the realm of the supernormal. He has never been sued for malpractice, although he has been accused of working for the devil by the Roman Catholic Church and other people. I see no crime in this because even Jesus was accused of the same thing. Frankly, Tony is in the same kind of activity as Jesus, except that this is two thousand years later. The difference is that we now have modern facilities of communication whereby this man can be observed, while in Jesus' time there was a great amount of superstition prevailing in the world."

In comparing Tony's healing work with that of Jesus, I wondered what Henry thought the religious significance would be, when the truth of "psychic surgery" had been scientifically proved beyond all doubt.

"I have given a great deal of thought to this," said Henry. "In my estimation, it will prove that the day of miracles is not over. It is my feeling that the trouble with our churches today is that they build fabulous edifices, while they fight on technical points interpreting both the New and Old Testaments, foolishly trying to convert people to their way of thinking without getting right down to the business of studying ESP as a scientific fact on a laboratory basis. You can't get round it. All religion has been based on belief in the supernormal. Why are we trying to dodge it today? Actually, when you think about how religion is sold to the public in these supposedly enlightened times, it is ridiculous. All this business about salvation, having faith, praying hard, means nothing *unless the miraculous actually exists.*

"It is one thing to talk about it but another thing to produce a man like this and have him demonstrate these powers as an established fact and not have it denounced as heresy. I think it is about time that religion came out of its superstitions and

technicalities and went to the laboratory for proof of such things as the Bible talks about. It's fine for a person to have a wonderful hypnotic voice like Billy Graham. A lot of people like to hear him talk. But it's high time we got down to the facts of the case and see these miracles demonstrated in broad daylight. If people can witness what I saw and are not shaken up, if they don't believe there is another world around us, after an experience like mine, there is little or no hope for anyone. We don't have to wait until we die to have these God-like powers verified.

"I am sure that if Tony could ever be brought to the United States to demonstrate his psychic surgery powers, a great number of religious leaders, as well as top medical men, would like to witness his work. I am equally sure that quite a number of people would accuse Tony of being possessed by the devil. Such persons feel uneasy in the presence of something they do not understand. It is easier and safer for their peace of mind if they condemn without investigation."

Henry had finished and the tape had run out. We sat in silence, gazing thoughtfully at one another. Then Henry spoke again, this time with a disturbed tone in his voice.

"I've saved this one for the last," he said. "And this is one of the reasons I have come to Chicago to see you. Before I left the Philippines I arranged to bring Tony and his attorney, Samuel Gines, to the States. I bought them both a round-trip air ticket. I promised to put up whatever expense money was needed and to pay the upkeep of their families while they were abroad. They apparently accepted.

"I told Tony I would like them to stop off for a few days in Tokyo, so that he could be tested by Japanese scientist friends of mine, en route to the States. Tony indicated that this was all right. I set the date when I would meet them at the airport in Tokyo, because I had to fly on ahead, on business. When the day came, I took my six Japanese friends to the airport as a welcoming committee to meet Tony and Gines. The plane came in—*and they were not on it.*"

"They missed the plane?" I interjected.

"No," said Henry, "they didn't come at all. I was never so embarrassed or humiliated. I felt that I had been made a fool of before all these Japanese notables."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"This is where I am afraid I made a big mistake," said Henry. "I phoned the U.S. Embassy in Manila and told them to hold up Tony's visa, that he was apparently not a man of his word, that he may have tried to cash in on the two round trip plane tickets I had given him. I asked for the consul to contact Tony and Gines and get my money back."

"You did this without trying to reach Tony and to determine from him why he did not meet you in Tokyo?" I asked.

Henry nodded. "I wrote Tony and Gines and reprimanded them for standing me up in this manner. I reminded them that I was a responsible American businessman, that I never went back on my word, and I had expected them to be equally honourable. I said it was evident to me now why the Filipino people had not amounted to more, if this was an evidence of their undependability and failure to live up to agreements."

Henry tossed over some carbon copies of the letters he had written. I was appalled.

"Why," said Henry, "should they have treated me this way?"

"Did you leave money with them for their expenses in the States, and for the care of their families while they were gone?" I asked.

"No," said Henry. "I was going to make that available after they arrived. They certainly knew I was good for it."

"I'm not so sure," said I. "If I were in their place, going to a strange land, eight thousand miles away, I would not be inclined to leave my family without the promised money in hand. I think you will find, when you have heard from Tony, if he or Gines reply to this blast, that this was the reason they decided not to come. Did they know where to reach you in Tokyo?"

"No," said Henry, "except at the airport when they were to arrive."

"Then they felt, if they didn't show up, you would get in touch with them to inquire the reason and this would give them

a chance to explain," I surmised. "Whereupon, if you had sent them the expenses, they would probably have joined you on the next plane."

"I don't know about that," said Henry. "As it stands now, Tony and Gines are not surrendering the plane tickets and I am holding them to account through the U.S. Embassy. This has nothing to do with my estimate of Tony's psychic surgery powers, but it is a most unfortunate personal relations problem. I don't know how to solve it, at the moment."

"Sorry I can't help you," I answered. "But my feeling, quite frankly, Henry, is that you goofed. You were too impulsive, you jumped too quickly to conclusions, you were so stung by humiliation, in the presence of your Japanese friends, that you blew your top, and took action and said things that have deeply offended Tony. It may be extremely difficult for you ever to get back into his good graces."

"Well, there are other psychic surgeons," said Henry, defensively. "Some say Terte is even better."

"Not from what I've heard you say about Tony," said I. "Somehow, Henry, you've got to straighten this mess out. But I don't have the answer tonight. I don't think you are going to find the answer, at this distance, with language barriers and communication difficulties, for some time."

At this moment the telephone rang. It was a long-distance call for me from a man named Thomas Becker, phoning from Los Angeles. He had traced me from my home number in Arkansas. Was I going to be in Chicago long enough for him to drive out and see me about a psychic problem? If not, when would I be back in Arkansas, so he could visit me there? I told him I would be back within a week.

Henry and I said "good-night." I told him I would write if I got any ideas that would be helpful. He said he was turning over in his mind the possibility of returning to the Philippines at the beginning of 1966. Would I be interested in going with him? This seemed out of the question at that time. But the forthcoming visit of this stranger, Tom Becker, was, amazingly enough, to change all that!

CHAPTER THREE

THE DECKER STORY ABOUT TONY

ON OCTOBER 26, 1965, around one p.m., a dust-covered car turned off the gravel road by our little brown house in the Ozark hills, and swung into our drive-way. It stopped by the front gate and a man and woman got out. I said to Martha, "That must be the Tom Beckers who said they would be driving here from California to see me."

We walked out to greet them, as a second man got out of the car, and stretched, to limber up after the long drive. He was a younger man of slender build, just under six feet, with pleasant features, and slightly balding.

"I presume you are the Beckers," I said, extending my hand to the couple.

"That's right," said the smaller man, and then turned to point at his male companion. "And I'm not trying to rhyme—but I've brought along Mr. *Decker*."

"Decker!" I repeated. Bells began to ring, as I eyed him. "You don't mean—this isn't *Nelson* Decker, the chiropractor . . . the man who's been to the Philippines, whom I wrote to about Tony?"

He grinned. "That's me!"

"Well, this *is* a surprise! Come in—all of you. Apparently we're going to have a lot to talk about!"

This proved to be a mammoth understatement. Our conversation started almost before we were seated in the living room and continued until the early hours of the morning.

Decker and I had not been talking more than a few minutes when Becker cut in to say: "*I* am the one who made the date to

see you, Sherman, about some personal psychic matters, but I see clearly that I must have done this to bring you and Decker together—so just forget me. My conference with you can wait."

It was a most gracious gesture on his part. We never got down to his problem, although the Beckers and Decker went on their way later the following day and then returned a few days later for further discussion.

I welcomed the unexpected meeting with Decker because my interest had grown through all I had read and heard about psychic surgery. He told me that he had been uncertain about accepting Becker's invitation to accompany them on a drive to the midwest, until Tom mentioned that he was calling on me, en route. Decker then recalled the letter I had written him on behalf of Swope and myself. Something told him this was the time to make contact with me.

"There is so much I would like to know about your experiences in the Philippines," I said. "I hope you don't mind my asking you a great many questions."

"Not at all," he said, easily. "Ask me anything you like and I'll try to answer it to the best of my ability."

"First, what took you to the Philippines?"

"I'd always been interested in different methods of healing. I was a practising chiropractor in New Jersey until 1961. But these methods, while effective in their way, did not fully satisfy me. I wanted to learn more. So I took time out in 1953 to study the healing practices of certain American Indians. They were accomplishing wonders simply by laying their hands on the sick. They taught me their technique and I added it to my treatments, with success. This led me to study metaphysics and philosophy. I got a few results in the healing of broken bones and in the treatment of cancer that shouldn't happen, according to our medical books. The American Medical Association had me arrested twice and I saw the handwriting on the wall. So I gave up my practice and went West, seeking new answers.

"In California I began teaching spiritual healing to different groups in the Los Angeles area. One day, in Pasadena, I picked up a copy of *Fate* magazine and read a story about Terte doing

wonderful healing in the Philippine Islands. That whetted my appetite right away. I said to myself with deep feeling and resolution: 'I want to see this person. I want to discover what he has and I want to be able to do it myself, if possible.'

"When you start picturing things, if you keep at it, what you visualise usually happens. Some months later, I made a trip to Tucson, Arizona, and met a woman who could not walk without a crutch because of an arthritic condition in her knee. She asked if I could help her. I said I would try. I sat and put my hands on her knee—and said a prayer. I made this contact for half an hour and talked to her. At the end of this time there was a change. She got up and walked without her crutch, for the first time in seven years. She reported the pain was gone and she could bend the knee.

" 'I heard you talking to my daughter about wanting to go to the Philippines to study the healers there,' she said to me.

" 'Yes, I want to go, but I don't have the money to do it.' I replied.

" 'We'll fix that up right now,' she said, and wrote me a cheque for $1,000 (about £334) to cover the return plane fare and expenses. So—that's how I got to the Philippines."

Decker had told me a simple, unaffected story. I felt his sincerity.

"What did you find when you got there?" I asked next.

"That's a pretty big order!" smiled Decker. "I can't answer in a few words. The flight to Manila took me twenty-one hours. I was very tired when I got there, but I phoned Professor Tolentino, the only one I knew to contact, and introduced myself over the phone. He invited me to come to his place immediately. It was a long taxi ride from the airport. Tolentino, if you don't know, is a world-renowned sculptor. His statues are all over the Philippines and he has created memorials for the United States government. He is seventy-five years of age but a very spry man.

"I spent the next day, the whole day, learning from Tolentino all about the spirit system, the spiritual growth in the Philippines, the healings, how they are done, by whom, and why, and

the philosophy behind them. Then I was given two weeks of training in the Manila area with the Espiritista group.

"I went to meetings at Professor Tolentino's house, where they preached in English and Tagalog by the hour. I was told to read the Bible, the 119th Psalm every night before retiring, and to study the Book of John, chapters 15 and 17, as these were the passages from which they gained their power and ability.

"At a meeting at the home of Mrs. Leonora Pangan, I was told it was the night for all to be tested to see if we qualified as mediums and healers, or if those who were already operating would be granted any further talents. I was told I should concentrate on reaching 'heaven' to see if the Holy Spirit would grant me the privilege of being an instrument through whom the power could work.

"Having knowledge of hypnosis and the cataleptic state, but not understanding exactly what the Espiritista meant, I spent five minutes putting myself into a state of cataleptic trance. In this dream-state condition I seemed to walk up three marble steps to a twelve-foot high stone door. I pushed it open and entered through the gates. I watched a white-robed, bearded man step out of a temple, approach me and hand me a scroll. On it were written instructions, including the Golden Rule.

"Later, I related all this to the Espiritista group. They assured me it was all true, as they had sent along one of their group to witness that St. Peter had, indeed, given me instructions and verified that I was acceptable as an instrument to be used by the Holy Spirit. They were extremely excited and happy that a mere American could reach 'heaven' on the first shot. This opened the door for me to go to Baguio with Terte, one hundred and fifty miles from Manila, and continue my training as a healer."

"I've heard a great deal about Terte," I said. "Is he as good as they say?"

"He's not only good," said Decker, "he's great. I spent most of the first month with him. I hadn't even met Tony yet. I would say that Terte and Tony are about on a par. Only Terte belongs to the Espiritista and Tony does not; Terte is highly

religious and Tony is not. Terte does most of his operating in Baguio. His healing group, when I was there, consisted of four healers and about twenty assistants. These were mostly young girls who sang, and people who held the Bible over the patients or preached from or about the Bible.

"The healing service was held on Saturday nights. We'd all go to the chapel about a mile out of town. We could go in a bus part of the way and walk the rest, on a dusty mountain path for half a mile. By six o'clock it is dark and on one side of this path is a sixty-foot drop. Rarely does anyone have a flashlight or any kind of a light. Some way for the crippled and sick to come and get healed!

"Then there were the polio patients. When we got to the church they were there, some with active polio fever at that very moment. Some patients were unconscious and other were mentally unbalanced. Terte's church, where the meeting was held, could hold perhaps a hundred comfortably. But he always had from two to three hundred at these services, packed to the windows, all the way around the little platform on which stood Terte, the patient and his assistants.

"The service started with singing. The congregation sounded all right in its way. When the singing stopped, someone would get up and start reading from the Bible. Of course this is in Tagalog, their language. I could not understand and once in a while someone would lean over and whisper to me.

" 'What they are saying now is that you should be like Jesus and love your neighbour.'

"I heard this when I was in Sunday School as a little boy; so I did not seem to be learning anything new here.

"This singing and preaching went on until two a.m. The audience was comprised of sick people, feverish, in pain; but the preaching had to come first! The last hour or two only Terte preached. This was fascinating to me because he would take his Bible, just an ordinary one, unmarked; and he would start preaching. He did it in English as well as in Tagalog. When he mentioned John 16:4, in his talk, he opened the Bible right to it!

"He did not have to turn another page. He did not have to

look for it. He just opened the book and there it was! Old Testament or New Testament, it made no difference. When he quoted a Bible passage, he just opened the book and started reading right there. I have a picture of him doing just that. You might say this is pretty good, three or four times a night—but a *hundred* times each night! Sometimes he would quote two hundred times from that Bible. He would be so much in tune with what he was saying, a passage would come to mind, he would open the book, and it would be right there!"

Decker was obviously carried away by his recital of these experiences, reliving them in his memory as he spoke. Martha and I listened with great and growing interest.

"You mean that you and the audience and patients had to go through all this, for hours and hours, before any healing could take place?" I asked.

"Yes," said Decker. "And, believe me, it gets pretty rough. But by two or three a.m. everyone has said their piece, about how good Jesus is and how good we should be, to be like him. Then an old, rickety table would be put in the middle of the platform and the people would line up for healing. They were told: 'All women with defective ovaries on the right side, stand over there. Those with ovaries affected on the left side, you stand over there. The rest of you just wait your turn.'

"The first patient would come up and lie on the table. Terte would come in, bend over and touch the patient and get her up. Each time he did this he would take out an ovary. It was only ten or fifteen seconds from the time the patient's feet left the floor to get on the table till they hit the floor on the other side after the operation—ten to fifteen seconds!

"I tried to get pictures, but it was happening so fast, you could hardly get any photographs, let alone a good one. I saw this go on by the hour. Sometimes at ten a.m. they were still working on patients! The female complaints were taken care of in the first hour. All the other patients, with paralysis, fevers, burns and things like that, were treated or operated on, one after the other.

"Some patients took all of ten minutes to be given treatment.

One night I saw over two hundred operations. In the month I was there at Baguio, five hundred, a thousand, I don't know. It didn't make any difference, you lost count as it went on continuously.

"Somewhere along the line, I contracted a 'bug' and started losing weight. Although I felt no physical pain, I wasn't too comfortable and didn't have much appetite. I weighed 190 pounds when I got to the Philippines. In a month I was down to 165. This loss of weight was due in part to the temperature, in part to the flies that were in the food, on top of the food and all over! And it was due also to the food itself.

"Before I left the States, I decided if I was going to learn anything while in the Philippines, I would have to live as they lived and eat as they ate. I slept in their houses. I drank what they drank. The water was usually terrible, so all we had was beer and Pepsi. They mix 'em—beer-Pepsis. It was better than water. Perhaps this explains why I lost weight.

"The funny part of it is, I had spent the last month before my trip, in the States, shrinking my stomach. I had been eating only the delicate vegetables and fruit for my life over there. I found that they eat *five meals a day*—rice, fish, seaweed and whatever else they throw in—and the *flies!*"

"From your description," I broke in, "the Philippines, parts of it at least, is no place for the squeamish."

Decker laughed. "They say a person can get used to anything in time, but I don't know. For example, I have a picture of a group of patients at midnight, still waiting to be taken care of. You can see the little kids waiting, too. But you can't see the mosquitos. You can't see the flies, the cockroaches crawling around on the walls; but they are all there, some place. Cockroaches are big, big as silver dollars, and nobody even bothers with them. They don't hurt anybody."

"Let's get back to Terte for a moment," I suggested. "What is his background. How old is he?"

"He's sixty years old," said Decker. "He was a guerrilla leader in the war with Japan. He had no way of removing shrapnel from the bodies of his men. He prayed over them to have it

removed. Night after night he prayed, but nothing happened. In 1948 he was doing magnetic healing on his farm and suddenly his patients' bodies started opening up. He was able to remove gallstones and infected tissue. From that time on he has been doing this work. I spent the first month watching him closely, trying to find out exactly what was happening. It was frustrating. You see bodies opening up right before your eyes, time and again. You can't understand how this could be possible.

"I remember one patient, a Mrs. Hall, from Canada. This woman had had cancer ten years ago. Her breasts had been removed. Two years ago she was in an automobile accident which apparently reactivated the cancer. Four weeks before she came to the Philippines she had been given six weeks to live. She and her husband had sold their farm in Canada, and had come to see Terte hoping she would be healed.

"I met them in this little church with its single twenty-five watt bulb in the middle for illumination, the only light in the whole building. Old newspapers covered the ceiling to keep the dirt from falling down; but long, black streamers of soot and dust hung from above, where the yellowed newspapers were torn.

"I saw this woman's operation at night. I had been there about a month. The operation was over in twenty to thirty seconds. Terte examined her.

" 'Yes,' he said. 'You have cancer. It is in the bottom of your lung.'

"She lay on the table. He opened her. He went in with his fingers and brought out something about the size of a ping-pong ball. I examined it myself a few minutes later. It was lung tissue. He just went in through the bare skin. That's all anyone could see. You could not see any more than that. It disturbed me a great deal because I had not actually seen that the body was open. There was no blood, of course. There was no pain to the patient, and no scar afterwards. What was happening, I did not know."

"It sounds absolutely fantastic," I said, "totally unbelievable!"

"It all does," admitted Decker. "But let me tell you more. This Mrs. Hall, and her husband, had an apartment right next to mine. The morning after this operation he came to me.

" 'Doctor, will you come and check my wife? I think she has phlebitis (inflammation of a vein's walls).'

" 'How did she get that?' I asked.

" 'She sat there all night in the cold, on those wooden benches. She couldn't move. You know how we were all packed in. This phlebitis started in her right leg, about six inches. She can't move because of the excruciating pain. She had it before, about three or four years ago, and she couldn't move for six weeks. We've got to go home, now that we suppose the cancer has been removed. The pain in her chest area is gone. She feels wonderful there, but she just can't move because of the leg. Will you try healing her leg?'

"Now, remember, I had been with Terte about a month. I had been eager to learn how he healed people, hoping I could some day do it. And I had recently asked him when it might be possible.

" 'It may take you three to five years,' Terte told me. 'All you have to do is read the Bible every night, John 15, 16, and 17.'

"Before that I had been reading the 119th Psalm every night as part of my training. But three to five years! I didn't want to wait that long. I couldn't stay in the Philippines for that time. And here was a woman with phlebitis in her leg and her husband asking me if I would try to heal her! I had seen Terte do magnetic healing with his hands. I had been successful with some cases in the States, using the American Indian method of laying on the hands. So I thought, why not?

"I sat down beside the woman and placed my hands over—not on—the leg. I imagined that I was pulling the congestion out by making passes—a pulling out motion—for about five minutes.

"I felt nothing, except that I noticed my hands were vibrating. She said that it felt like little threads were being pulled out of her leg. A lot of pain was gone, about twenty-five per cent. That made me feel good because I apparently was doing some-

thing. But I couldn't finish the job. This was as far as I could go.

"Three or four hours later, Terte came around. This in itself was unusual. He seemed to know he was needed. He checked her and she told him she felt fine as far as the cancer was concerned. She felt it was all gone, no more aches or pains in that area, but she was having trouble with her leg.

"Terte took a look at it, as I watched him. Then I was surprised and thrilled to see him do exactly what I had done. He pulled downward over the leg with his hands, for about five minutes. In that time she said it felt as though a rope was being pulled out.

"She got up. She walked. She had no pain. Four days later, at the airport, she walked into the terminal carrying her own luggage. Her phlebitis was gone completely. That was magnetic healing. That is how Terte works. That is what I had instinctively tried to do. But since I had been discouraged by not getting results from the instructions he had given me, to date, I had almost decided I might as well go home and start reading my Bible. Somehow I had lacked the faith in treating this woman, although I had started going about it in the right way.

"I decided that perhaps I had learned all I could from Terte and I had better look elsewhere for more knowledge about psychic healing. So I took a bus from Baguio to Manila. I'd already gone back and forth so many times I couldn't remember whether it was first or third class. The difference is that in third class they put the pigs, goats, chickens and everything else with you. On first class, they only pack people in on top of you and all over you, on your lap, two or three to a seat. The bus leaves on schedule. When it is full, it goes!

"It was the end of February, 1965, when I checked into the Y.M.C.A. in Manila, thinking it was about time I should head for the States. I learned, however, that there was a special meeting to be held at Professor Tolentino's, so I determined to take one more shot at it, to see what was going on there. During the evening I asked for the twentieth or thirtieth time if I could get in touch with a fellow by the name of Tony.

"No, no one had heard of Tony for a long, long time; but here is Blanche.

" 'What does Blanche do?' " I asked.

" 'He does good. You get up there and see him.'

"So, after their prayers and talking half the night—in Manila they only go on to midnight because their time schedule is different and some of them have to go to work the next morning—they got down to this healing business.

"A patient who needed an abdominal operation was laid on the table. Blanche came in. Now, remember, all the healers of the Espiritista group go into trance. They do not know what they are doing. Blanche poked around. Yes, this person did need an operation. There was something wrong inside. Well, I saw something new. Blanche just held his finger about eight to ten inches above this woman's body, and moved it horizontally through the air and her body opened up. Honest—it opened up without his touching it. Then he went inside, took out a growth, pressed the incision together again, put a piece of adhesive tape over it, and that was it!

"I'm telling you—that was worth studying! No sleight-of-hand here! Worth coming to the Philippines just to see this. And I had to see it some more! I watched a number of operations. Blanche can open this way, but he can't close. He has to let nature help out when he brings the flesh together again. Some psychic healers can do one thing, some another. Few of them can do the whole job, but most of them get good results.

"I discovered that Blanche will take anyone's finger—he used mine once—hold it about ten inches above the patient lying on the table, and goes swish! As he does this, the body below opens up, just as if a razor blade or a scalpel had cut it. *Ten inches away*, nothing touching the patient's body; but there it is, wide open!

"I witnessed this time and again. I couldn't get a picture of it. All there would be was the finger over the body; no auras, no spirits standing around behind or floating above the body. But the Spiritists claimed it was the Holy Spirit doing the work. They had some strange names for Holy Spirit, but that's the

Filipino way. We've all heard of Jesus, St. Michael and St. Peter. They're all there. But I don't think anyone in the States has heard of Dr. Rizal. They have. He's a holy spirit to them! He does a lot of their operations.

"Who was—or *is*—Dr. Rizal? He happens to have been a saviour of the Philippine Islands about a century ago. Jose Rizal (1861–1896), a Filipino patriot, was a Jesuit, trained in Manila. He took a medical degree at the University of Madrid, 1884, and went on to do graduate work in medicine at Berlin and Heidelberg. He returned home to write revolutionary novels against the Spanish corruption and the Roman Catholic Church, and the authorities forced him into exile. He finally set up medical practice in Hong Kong. He returned to Manila as a revolutionary agitator in 1892. He was imprisoned, escaped to Cuba in 1896, was arrested again and returned to Manila to be tried and executed as an instigator of insurrection.

"So now Dr. Rizal is a part of the Holy Spirit. It works through Blanche and a few others. If they perform operations and fail, it is not the Holy Spirit; the failure takes place in the consciousness of the patient. But the successes, I would say, are more than ninety per cent."

"When did you finally get to meet Tony?" I asked.

"I'm finally coming to him," said Decker. "I continued to ask for Tony. At last I found one person who could take me to him. She was a young woman named Delia. When she showed me where he lived, in Quezon City about four miles south of Manila, I went to his house about ten p.m. All the homes there have walls along the edge of their property. It's not too safe at night in many places in the Philippines. The Filipinos condemn us for our crimes of violence. They've been seeing all our old movies about Al Capone and people being shot down in the streets.

"In the Philippines almost everyone carries a gun. You have to leave your gun at the counter when you go into a movie, or at the desk when you are going swimming or having lunch at a restaurant. The good guys and the bad guys carry guns. Business places and hotels are guarded by officers with guns.

While I was in the Philippines, one senator and three or four Congressmen were killed right on the steps of the Senate House, in Manila, in Quezon City. I had my pocket picked once. But the Filipinos believe conditions are much worse in America. Al Capone and his men are still running wild in the streets, banging away with sawn-off shotguns and machine guns!

"I don't know how I got off on this. I was telling you about calling on Tony, the first time, at night, I liked him right away. Nice and easy-going, pleasant smile, firm yet soft hand shake, unusual hands . . . and he is always smoking cigarettes. I told Tony what I had been doing, that I had been studying with the Espiritista, largely under Terte and Blanche. He smiled and asked me if I had seen Mercado. I said, 'Not yet.' He quietly remarked that he had helped train him.

" 'He is good,' said Tony. 'He will be better when he gets more faith and confidence in himself.'

"We talked for about two hours. All this time, without my realising it, Tony was sizing me up. Perhaps it's more accurate to say, some power or intelligence that Tony calls his 'Protector' was looking me over. Finally, around midnight, Tony said: 'You'll do. You're all right. You want to learn how to operate. I'm going to teach you. The Holy Spirit says you are the one to be taught. I'll teach you!'

"What was *I* to say to this? It was what I had wanted—what I was seeking. There was so much I couldn't understand about what I had witnessed so far. I just had to accept, had to go along.

"Tony told me he was supposed to turn the power over to someone in his family, but no one seemed to be ready or sufficiently interested, so apparently I had come along at the right moment.

" 'Come in tomorrow morning at eight o'clock and we'll start,' he said. 'You just watch for a couple of days. When I feel you're ready, I'll turn the power over to you, so you can see how it works.'

" 'That's fine,' I said. 'I'll be here, but, meanwhile, what prayers do I have to say now?'

" 'Don't worry about any prayers,' said Tony. 'If the Holy Spirit wants someone to be well, He'll get them well right then and there, without having to sit or stand around for a couple of hours saying prayers, letting the patient get more sick and die while you're reading the Bible. We are going to operate immediately when anyone is sick.' "

Decker paused to see how I was taking all of this. "Do you think I'm completely nuts?" he asked. "Lots of folks do."

"No," I said, "as fantastic as what you are telling me sounds, it has a ring of truth in it. I'm quite sure you cannot be making this all up. What was the first operation of Tony's that you saw?"

Decker gave a reminiscent smile. "It was a beaut," he said. "A shocker right off the bat! When I walked into Tony's place the next morning at eight o'clock, there was a girl sitting in a chair, waiting.

" 'Doc,' said Tony, 'you're just in time. I need some help.'

" 'Good,' I replied. 'What would you like me to do?'

" 'Find me a pair of forceps,' said Tony.

"Forceps! There wasn't any more sign of forceps than there would be of a humming bird. I finally found them, holding up mosquito netting over a bed. I let the netting drop and carried the rusty forceps back into the living room where the operation was to be performed.

" 'I want you to take the polyps out of her nose when I cut them loose,' Tony directed.

" 'Okay,' I said, and took my stand in front of the patient.

"Tony moved around behind her, with the girl seated upright in a chair. In eight seconds, suddenly, with his hands reaching down over her nose from the back, there was blood running down her face. She was breathing heavily through her mouth, wide open, and Tony was in there working, his fingers massaging all the while. My eyes got big. Tony was splashing blood, some of it got on my shirt. There were about fifteen people who had come in, crowding around, watching.

"Now I could look right into the patient's sinuses, seeing the bone and tissue and muscle. I was dumbfounded.

" 'Okay!' said Tony, eyeing me. 'I'm going to cut the polyps loose!'

"Suddenly, I could see two polyps at the bottom of the nasal passages. I reached out a shaky hand and took hold of them with the forceps. They were swollen and inflamed-looking. I dropped them in a basin that one of Tony's assistants held out to me. In another minute, Tony had closed the opening he had made in the nose. They washed the blood off the patient's face and she looked up smiling. She had choked on the blood, but it had stopped now, and she was fine. She could breathe freely through her nose. She was perfect. Aside from the blood stains on her dress you would not have known she had been operated upon.

"Whew! It took a little while for this initial shock to wear off, but I soon got used to it, as this went on day after day after day.

"One day, I asked Tony, 'Why the blood?'

" 'Well, the Espiritista are bloodless,' he replied. 'They have an organisation. You have to go to their church and be a member, with all their rigamarole. I have to impress the people that I am really doing something.'

"He was impressing them. When he did an operation, he would open the body. There was no question about it, the body would be wide open! So much so that anyone could put their finger in, and he would ask them to do so.

" 'Stick your finger in there,' he would say, 'so you'll know it is open!'

"And he would give the doubter a piece of cotton to wipe the blood off his fingers afterwards! The heck with peritonitis to the patient! Tony wasn't concerned about that. To heck with the flies around the patient, too! Somehow the patients did not get sick. No peritonitis would set in. And when Tony finished operating, he would often splash blood around before closing the wound, just for show!"

Martha and I looked at one another. The incredible was becoming more and more incredible. "But you say Tony doesn't really have to make a display of blood?" I asked.

"He says not," replied Decker. "The way he explained it to

me, he is in and out of the body so fast, many patients and their friends and relatives don't believe he's done anything. But if they can go home with blood-splattered undergarments, they can prove they really had an operation."

"Fantastic!" I had to admit, "utterly fantastic!"

"It's all fantastic," said Decker. "I could tell you more. I could go on for hours. Am I tiring you?"

"Not in the least," I assured him, and glanced at the Beckers, who had been listening quietly but attentively. "You've probably heard Decker go over this before. Do you mind?" I asked.

"Whatever you want to know, ask him," said Becker. "It's all beyond me."

I thought for a moment. "There's so much I'd like to know," I said. "For example, how does Tony diagnose? How does he know what's wrong?"

Decker nodded. "I figured you'd be coming to that sooner or later. This had me puzzled from the start when I was watching Terte work. Some patients come to Terte and Tony and other healers after they have been diagnosed by medical men. Lots of others come who are ill and don't know what the trouble is. It makes no difference to Terte or Tony. They pay no attention to what the patients or any doctors think is wrong.

"I've heard them say, many times, after running their hands over a body, within a minute or two: 'No, I'm sorry, that's not it. The Holy Spirit says it is this or that. The pain may be down here in your appendix region, but the trouble is away up here.' And then they will operate at that spot and the patient gets well. The Holy Spirit—if you've got a better name for it, use it—seems to know, and that's the diagnosis that Terte and Tony follow.

"I stayed with Tony for weeks and I saw him perform a wide variety of operations. Thirty to fifty a day—seven days a week! Most of the people who came were poor. They couldn't afford to pay more than a few pesos, if any. Maybe Tony would receive ten pesos for restored eyesight, for removing cataracts. One patient had glaucoma. She paid five pesos (about 9s.) to get her eyesight back.

"I happened to be with Tony when this woman, in her sixties, came in. She said her case had been medically diagnosed as glaucoma in 1946. Pressure in her eyeballs had destroyed the nerve endings. She was blind in both eyes and could never see again. In 1957 she was diagnosed again by a doctor. His conclusions: glaucoma, nerve endings destroyed, incurable.

"Tony was leaning up against the door frame, smoking a cigarette, listening almost listlessly, it seemed, to her report.

" 'Glaucoma,' he said, putting his cigarette away. 'I can take care of glaucoma. Sit over here.'

"He led the patient to a chair and sat her down. In ten or fifteen seconds he had her eyeball in his hand! He picked up a dirty old pair of tweezers, reached in behind the eyeball and took 'fatty tissue' out of the socket. There were about ten people in the room watching him do it, so he splashed a little blood around as he put the eyeball back. In another minute or so, he did the same with the other eyeball. He removed what I would call 'fatty tissue' out of the eyeball socket. He put a little ointment on the eyeballs as he replaced them. Then he covered them with bandages, told her to come back in three days, and that was that!

"Three days later, the daughter brought her mother in. Tony took the bandages off. I was really expecting something. Could she see? No, she couldn't.

" 'How are you?' Tony asked.

" 'I feel all right, but I can't see,' she replied.

" 'You will—you'll see in a month or two,' said Tony, and went to the next patient.

"I said to myself: "That's one easy way to get rid of a patient. Build up her hopes. And she had paid five pesos for the operation.' But about a week later we were called to a home for an operation. It turned out to be the house of this woman who had had glaucoma. As we walked through the door there she sat—*reading the evening newspaper!* Nineteen years blind from glaucoma and there she was *reading!*

"If it were just one case, you would say, 'Well, a miracle happened.' I saw over a thousand operations by Tony alone.

I saw many operations performed by Terte and his group. I don't know how many I saw altogether, but none of the patients died, and almost all got well. So how do you find words for what is happening?"

Decker was about to relax from his long dissertation when he suddenly recalled something of vital interest and sat bolt upright.

"Oh, I must tell you this! You probably won't believe it, but this really tops them all—in operations, I mean. And it gave me a terrific fright. I'm sure you'll soon understand why.

"A patient came to Tony from a hospital where he had just been X-rayed. He had a peptic ulcer. I know what they are. I've worked on them as a chiropractor. It usually takes two or three months of treatments to get one cleaned up.

"We had just been eating and had the food spread out on the table Tony sometimes used for operating. He pushed the fish and the rice out of the way. Our fingers were greasy. We hadn't washed our hands. With the food removed, Tony had the man lie down on the table. He didn't see the X-ray. He only had the man's word that he had a peptic ulcer.

" 'Pull your shirt up,' said Tony.

"The man, hot, sweaty and sticky, pulled his shirt up. Tony stepped aside, wiped his greasy fingers, then ran them over the man's body.

" 'Yes, the X-ray's right,' he said. 'You've got an ulcer!'

"With this, he made a quick cutting motion with his right hand above the patient's abdomen. There suddenly appeared about a six-inch gash. Tony pulled the flesh apart, reached in and pulled out a section of the man's intestines. The patient looked down and saw his intestines in Tony's hands, six or eight inches above his body, just as though they were on a string! His patient, wide awake, feeling no pain, was staring at his own organs!

" 'Doc, will you help me?' asked Tony, nodding to me.

"I was on the other side of the table, just as dumbstruck as the patient. 'What can I do?' I heard myself ask.

" 'Get a pair of scissors!' ordered Tony.

" 'My God, a pair of scissors—when you cut everything with the Holy Spirit?' I protested.

" 'Get a pair of scissors!' Tony insisted.

"I ran around, looking. Finally, in his wife's sewing basket, I found a pair so rusty and dull it looked as though they wouldn't cut butter. Meanwhile, Tony had located the stretch of intestine containing the peptic ulcer. 'There it is,' he said, and held it up.

"There was a little red spot on the intestine, about the size of a dime. I had seen this type of spot before and recognised it as a peptic ulcer.

" 'Now,' said Tony to me, 'I want you to cut the intestine right down there,' indicating where he meant.

" 'My God, Tony, if I cut the man's intestine, he'll die! This is a six-hour operation in any hospital.' I had forgotten the patient, that he was not under an anaesthetic, that he could hear every word I said.

" 'Cut it!' Tony demanded. 'Cut it!'

"I hesitated, standing there with the pair of scissors. The last conscious thought I had was: 'Well, I've come eight thousand miles. If they're going to throw me in jail, I might as well die here.' So, I cut the man's intestines right in half.!"

As Decker said this, I observed there were beads of perspiration lining his forehead. Reliving this experience had been having its effect. It was obvious he had not invented it.

"Don't stop here!" said I, with all of us now hanging in suspense. "What did Tony do?"

Decker illustrated with his hands. "Tony took the two ends of the severed intestines and emptied out the bad section. Then with his little finger of his right hand, he went 'swish', and cut off the other end of it. He handed me six inches of the man's guts containing the peptic ulcer.

"I wondered what the man was going to do without these six inches of intestine. I looked down. Then I saw Tony take the two severed ends and bring them together. They no sooner touched than they welded themselves perfectly; without a scar, without a mark—*together!*

"There had been other witnesses to this operation, as there usually are. When blood splashed, some of them screamed and jumped back. But Tony wasn't through yet. He still had to put the intestines back inside, which I saw him do next. My God, I was hoping he would get them back in there straight.

"Tony poked about, here and there inside the man's body. Then he withdrew his hands and passed them over the gash. It closed up and pulled together—perfect. Not a mark, no redness, and, of course, no pain! They wiped the blood off him. Within a few minutes he got off the table, walked out to his truck, and went back to work. No recuperation necessary. No problem—and there I was still hanging on to a piece of the man's—you know what!"

Decker paused to give us a chance to recover. If this were true—and how could we challenge this story at a distance of over eight thousand miles from the scene where this incredible operation was reported to have taken place?—it would rock the medical profession. It would bring about a re-evaluation of religious concepts, of the very nature of the physical universe and the forces or energies in and around us.

"Can you possibly top this?" I asked Decker, when we had somewhat adjusted.

"I doubt it, but then, everything that happens is a *topper* in comparison to something else. For instance, I took time off from Tony, one day, to run up to Rosales, several hundred miles away, to see the healing work of Mercado, who had been trained by him.

"I watched as one woman, with abdominal cancer, stood before Mercado. He ran his hand over her abdomen, and opened and removed the diseased tissue with no more blood than Tony. This was done in two to three minutes, the patient being completely healed as she stood there. She then thanked Mercado and walked away—minus the cancer.

"Even though I felt I was in perfect health, it was suggested that I receive a spiritual injection from Mercado. Reluctantly, I stepped up to him. In his trance he reached into the Bible, to St. John 17, and extracted an imaginary hypodermic needle

and syringe. He took my left arm and made a jabbing motion. Suddenly I felt an extremely sharp pain, just as if a real needle or injection was being given.

"I thanked him for the shot and was very much impressed with what I considered his great hypnotic ability upon me. I turned my back to leave when, without my knowledge, he decided to give me another injection between the shoulder blades, completely catching me off guard. I again felt the sharp needlepoint pain, but this time in the back. I knew then that he didn't have me under hypnosis. There had to be a higher power working through him.

"But getting back to Tony. I had heard that he did brain and heart surgery, too, but you don't get cases like this every day. The first time I saw the skull open up and Tony remove a tumour from the brain . . . well, it just didn't happen—it *couldn't!*

"And when he performed open heart surgery, he went in through the side, right through the rib cage. Where the ribs went, I don't know. The body was open and there was the heart beating away. Tony worked very quickly.

" 'Some day you'll be able to do this,' he said to me.

"I'm not looking forward to it, believe me, much as I'd like to operate like Tony does. He went into the heart itself, between beats, took fatty tissue out of the valve, and closed it without skipping a beat! That's how fast and dextrous Tony was in doing *open heart surgery*, without dropping blood out of the heart. Call me a liar. You'll have to see it for yourself to believe it, and then maybe you won't, like others have said. They just can't, they won't let themselves believe it. It's easier to pretend it can't be done, that it's all an illusion, then you don't have to try to explain it."

Decker was deeply moved at this point as he was recalling a wide range of operations he had witnessed.

"I saw Tony do varicose vein operations," he continued. "The woman had discoloration from a vein broken in her ankle. It didn't hurt her; she just didn't like it there. Tony opened the ankle, took out the excess blood, and healed it. Five

minutes later, when I looked at that ankle, there was no discoloration, no dark spots."

"How do patients react to such healings?" I asked. "Aren't they excited about them?"

"No, most of them just seem to take them for granted," said Decker. "The Filipino people's attitude is much different from the Americans'. They come to Terte or Tony in a matter-of-fact way. They are happy, without much seeming reason, accepting what happens to them, good or bad. If they need an operation, they submit to it. Once in a while a person will get nervous or tense. Most of them are not afraid because, while waiting their turn, they've seen five or six operations and know that there is nothing to it, no pain, no bad after-effects.

"Just the same, I remember one case where a woman was having a goitre removed. She sat up in the middle of the operation, deciding that she didn't want to go through with it. Her throat was already open and the goitre half-removed. She had to be pushed back down again so the operation could be completed. For a moment, it was touch-and-go because Tony had to keep his hand in the open wound in the throat, and finish it, after she laid down again."

"That's something I've been wondering about," I interjected. "Is it necessary for Tony to hold the incisions open once he makes them?"

"Absolutely!" replied Decker. "This applies to all the psychic surgeons. They must always keep one hand in the open wound. This keeps the power there. If the hand is taken away, the wound closes instantly, automatically. So, if you have cotton in there, or a towel, and the wound closes, then you'd have to open up the body again. The left hand is usually the retracting hand, that holds the wound open. The right hand is the operating or cutting hand, the instrument for performing the operation. This hand has three different cutting edges; the side of the hand, the little finger and the forefinger are used principally.

"Terte and Tony use no knives. They sometimes use forceps after they have cut the tissues or organs loose, to extract them from the body, as they are so slippery. I've told you that Tony

has used the scissors several times. I don't know why, because I've seen him do the same kinds of operations without them. Perhaps, on occasion, he is directed to do it. Who knows?

"Some of the Spiritists cannot open up, so they take a knife and actually cut the body. Then they do the necessary psychic healing and close the body, without a scar, even though the knife was used at the start. Take Blanche, for example. As I have said, he can open perfectly, and without even touching the body, but he can't close. It may be that he doesn't have sufficient faith in his ability to close. I don't know what it takes. I don't begin to have the answers to what is going on.

"These healers do lots of other things. I haven't seen it, but I've heard there is one healer in the southern part of the Island *who actually walks on water!* When I asked Tony about it, he grinned and said: 'So, what? How does that help anybody?' "

Once more Decker paused. We were so engrossed in what he had been saying that we sat silently, perhaps speechless is a better way to describe our feelings at that moment. Decker cleared his throat, a bit self-consciously.

"Now I come to something," he ventured, "if you want to hear the whole story of my experiences, that you may find hardest to believe of all." He looked at us, testily.

"We're still with you," I assured him, "even though we're finding it pretty stratospheric going!"

Decker gave a rather forced smile. He spoke slowly as though weighing carefully what he was considering saying.

"I don't know whether I should tell you this or not. You would have to take my word for it at present and this might not be enough. Of course, you could check with Tony. If you met him and he got to know you, he would probably confirm it."

"Go ahead!" I invited. "Let's hear it. Let us be the judge."

"Well," said Decker, "I told you I went to the Philippines to study psychic surgery, with the hope that if there was any truth to it I could get someone there to teach me how to practise it myself."

"I remember," I said.

"You recall my saying that Tony had volunteered to train me?"

"Yes."

"That's just what he did. He gave me a chance to work with him more and more. He promised, when I got familiar enough with what he was doing, he would transfer some of this power to me. He made it plain that it would be a considerable time before I would be developed enough to retain this power so I could operate on my own. But he started me out, one day, on extracting teeth."

"You mean, he made a dentist out of you?" I suggested, with an attempt at humour.

"Hardly that," said Decker. "Strangely enough, however, my mother is a dental hygenist and a very good one. But I didn't take after her. I didn't like the idea of getting into people's mouths. And yet this is the first assignment I get. The first time I tried it I was all thumbs. Tony, watching me, stepped in, smiling, and took over the operation.

" 'No, no,' he said. 'To start, you point at the tooth with your thumb, like this, to deaden the pain. Then you take two fingers, like this—*swish!*—and out it comes!'

" 'How?' I asked him. 'You did it so fast, I didn't see!'

" 'Look,' said Tony, 'it's simple.' He motioned to the next patient waiting for a tooth extraction. 'If you can't get a good hold, take two matchsticks.'

"He took two ordinary matchsticks, opened the patient's mouth and located the infected tooth. Then he placed the matchsticks on each side of this tooth, jerked rapidly upward, and out it came.

"It was two weeks before I could pull teeth without difficulty. Tony could pull most of them without matchsticks, but I, somehow, couldn't get a good enough grip, even though I felt unusual strength pass into my fingers. Then I began operating on skin cysts, all under Tony's direction.

"We went on a mission to the island of Batangas. News spread that there were a couple of doctors there to give healings and boats came from all directions. We had two to three

hundred natives at that location. On one side of the room Tony was doing major operations, and I was on the other side pulling teeth. As long as I was in Tony's immediate environment I could do this effectively. This proved to me that this invisible power was functioning through Tony and that he had direction of it, to a remarkable degree.

"One day Tony told me he felt I was ready to attempt a major operation. A woman with a cancer in the uterus had come. 'I am going to fix it so you can operate on her,' said Tony, 'but, first, I will have to put you under influence.' I knew what he meant, this would be a form of hypnotism. He blew on my ear and on my hands. A chill went through my body, something you could experience only in a higher state of consciousness, nothing I can describe in words. But anyone familiar with the cataleptic state, the deepest form of hypnosis, would possibly understand my feelings.

"I was awake enough to remain on my feet. I knew what I was doing, but I also knew that something working through me was doing it. I forced my eyes to stay open so I could see what was going on, but it was very hard to see. After that first operation, I did others, always under Tony's observation, with the trance state only in my arms and hands.

This is the way Tony does it. He never goes into an unconscious state to perform his operations. The power and intelligence are only in his hands and arms. This is how he taught me to do it. There is a tingling sensation in the hands, when the power moves in. They are very heavy before they start to do the actual work. Then you kind of forget about everything.

"That first time, when I saw the body open up under my hands, I froze, and my hands stopped operating. Tony said: 'Look away. Get your mind off it. You're not doing this. Let the God-power do it!' The instant I shifted my attention away, my hands and arms started moving, completed the operation and closed up the body!"

"Remarkable!" I said. "I don't wonder you hesitated telling us about this. I can well understand that few listeners would believe or accept this story. They would certainly put you

down as a quack, a crackpot, a self-deluded sensation-seeker or an out-and-out liar."

"I found that out," Decker said, ruefully. "And yet, so help me, it's true."

You, the reader, have now been exposed to Decker's full report as he made it to us that long, absorbingly interesting night of October 26, 1965. He has since had much of this material published in mimeographed pamphlet form, which he has used in connection with his lectures.

Fantastic as these experiences sound, do they strike you as the concocted product of an individual addicted to narcotics, or fantasied adventures in LSD, or the imaginative flights of a psychopathic liar? Remember, William Henry Belk's report is not too unlike Decker's in many particulars; nor is the report of Ormond and McGill, J. Bernard Ricks, and others.

There is an old saying, "There's no smoke without fire."

His story told in all its challenging, though gory, details, Decker now relaxed and spoke of his plans for bringing Agpaoa to the United States.

"No doubt I went about it in the wrong way," he confessed. "I knew it would take money to get Tony here—money I didn't have. I knew, too, there would be plenty of people willing to pay a fair price for Tony to operate on them. But my efforts didn't work out. One of the main reasons was that another American, Henry Belk, who also wanted to bring Tony to the States, got in trouble with him, and had his visa held up. So Tony couldn't come over, for anybody, under any circumstances. I think Belk did this, as much as anything, to keep *me* from getting Tony."

"I can set you straight on that," I said. "I happen to know Henry Belk well. I spent some time with him just two weeks ago in Chicago and he told me of his experiences with Tony. It is true that Belk is in deep trouble, of his own making, with Tony. But it has nothing to do with his trying to keep Tony away from you. The fact it has worked out this way is purely coincidental. Belk blocked Tony's visa in a claim he is making against him for return of the money he has tied up in two

round-trip plane tickets. That this has had repercussions on you and your plans is just one of those things."

Decker sat for a moment in silent review of the situation.

"Have you ever met Belk?" I asked.

"No," said Decker. "But I haven't heard too much good about him."

"I know," I admitted. "I do not approve of some things Henry has done and have told him so. But I am convinced his intentions are of the best. And I am sure, if you will permit me to tell Henry of your visit and your experiences with Terte, Tony and the rest, that he will offer to help in any way he can. Perhaps if Henry can settle his differences with Tony, you can both bring him to this country, at the right time, and under the right auspices."

"What do you mean by the right auspices?" asked Decker.

"Well, I have a newly-formed ESP Research Associates Foundation," I said. "It has not attained tax exemption status yet, so it is not adequately financed. Henry has the Belk Psychic Research Foundation, with some resources. For Tony to come to the United States, properly protected, it would not be wise for an individual to sponsor him. But if one or both of our foundations could arrange for Tony to be brought here and to demonstrate his psychic surgery powers before proper medical authorities, without a fanfare, and without any charges for his services, strictly in the interest of science, I believe something of possible great value to mankind could be accomplished."

"Where would I fit into such a picture?" Decker asked, after a long pause.

"You could well be associated," I said. "And because you have had much greater experience with Tony than any other American, and have even performed a few operations, with his help, I would think you could be of great service."

"Okay," said Decker. "I don't have the means to go through with my plans for Tony. It looks to me like things are all in a mess at present. See what you can do with Belk and let me know. I'm going to sit tight for a while."

It was getting late and Decker and the most patient and considerate Beckers arose to go.

"I'd like to say this," Decker added. "If it turns out that Tony doesn't or can't come over here, I want to go back to the Philippines and resume my training with him, and stay as long as is necessary for me to make myself a permanent channel for the functioning of this God-power or Holy Spirit through me. Then I want to return to the States and demonstrate that this power can manifest through anyone who is sufficiently consecrated and dedicated, for the benefit of mankind."

"I wish that I or my foundation had the resources," I said. "I would gladly make it possible for you to do this."

"Thanks," said Decker. "I'm leaving things in God's hands from now on. I haven't been able to work it out for myself. In a week or so I'll be going back to the coast with the Beckers. I won't do anything until I hear from you."

"It's possible," I said, "that Belk may be wanting to return to the Philippines himself after the first of the year. He hinted at this when I talked with him in Chicago. From what you have told me about Terte, Tony and Blanche tonight. I believe I would be interested in making the trip myself, if it could be worked out. But, if this happens, I promise I'll do everything possible to take you along, too."

"It would be fine with me," said Decker. "Just give me half an hour's notice!"

The Beckers and Decker disappeared into a beautiful, starry Arkansas autumn night. I heard the scratch of their car tyres on the gravel as they disappeared over the mountain. Events were even then shaping in the mysterious dimension of future time. I was about to become a party to one of the greatest spiritual adventures of my life.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PLOT THICKENS

FORTUNATELY, FOR THE RECORDS, my correspondence files are kept up to date for ready reference. In the introduction to this book, I promised that I would speak the truth in every respect and present the facts, as applied to this investigation of healing in the Philippines, as far as they have been discerned. I am proceeding without fear or favour so that you, the reader, may make your own judgments and arrive at your own conclusions.

Go back with me now to February, 1965. My foundation had tentatively arranged with Eileen Garrett, head of the Parapsychology Foundation, in New York, to conduct a series of astral projection experiments in association with Dr. Ian Stevenson, Director of Neurology and Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Virginia, in Charlottesville.

It was our plan to test at least three subjects who purported to have developed the ability to leave their physical bodies at will. We would ask them, individually, under scientific observation, to project themselves astrally to an address they had never visited physically. Upon a return to their respective physical bodies, each was then to report his memory of where he had been and what he had witnessed or experienced while in the astral state. It was to be hoped that these three subjects would be able to meet in the astral dimension, so-called, to communicate, one with the other, and to bring back some record of said communication, for cross-check purposes, upon awakening in their physical bodies.

Eileen Garrett had volunteered to pay the expenses of this proposed experiment through her foundation since mine did not yet have tax deductible clearance and, consequently, little

or no funds. When it appeared that all arrangements had been completed for this scientific study, I wrote to my physicist friend, Bob Swope, who had expressed a desire to work with me. I told him of the plan and invited his participation. Bob was then associated with the Bio-Astronautics Department of the Aero-Space Corporation in El Segundo, California.

He answered my letter immediately, on February 17, saying in part:

> Just received your most welcome letter and was immensely pleased to hear of your planned experiments in the latter part of April. Needless to say, I will make arrangements to attend and assist in any way possible. . . .
>
> This may be somewhat premature but I would like to offer a few suggestions with regard to the experimental design and proposed subjects. . . .

Bob continued with some excellent recommendations, outlining these scientific instrumentation proposals:

> With regard to the experimental design, both physical and physiological data should be collected and correlated on a real time basis. As you suggested, heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature and respiration should be gathered. But of major significance would be the ability to determine depth of sleep by an electroencephalograph and/or galvanic skin response. Admittedly an EEG is difficult to instrument outside of a laboratory since brain wave voltage is very low (between twenty and two hundred microvolts) and frequency can vary from a fraction of a cycle to as much as sixty cycles, grounding and shielding from both radiated and conducted noise is not only mandatory but is also a difficult task. However, I feel it is imperative to be able to time orient depth of sleep.
>
> Physical verification of projection could be accomplished by identifying in real time numbers, objects, etc., unknown to the participants (five dice in a closed container, for example). This then could be correlated with physiological results gathered by the above described methods. The experiment as a whole would gain considerable credence by the addition of physical experiments. Physiological data alone might prove interesting but

inconclusive. Combined, this information should pave the way toward a more comprehensive, experimental programme.

As a last suggestion, the three experimental subjects should be requested to sleep on an alternating eight hour shift. This allows a continuous twenty-four hours a day utilisation of the research instrumentation and recording apparatus.

As a final comment, both still and motion picture documentation should be available in conjunction with tape recorders and pen recorders.

During the next two months you will probably be overburdened with making arrangements and finalising schedules. Therefore, if I can be of assistance in preparing or expanding the research plan, don't hesitate to call or write. I have a thirty-five mm still colour camera, an eight mm wide angle movie camera, and a tape recorder, which I will be glad to make available for the experiment . . .

Bob closed his most helpful and appreciated letter, with this personal commentary:

I would like to say, Harold, that you cannot be commended too highly for your untiring effort and I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to participate in a project which I believe has tremendous potential. There are a number of questions in your last letter which I haven't answered but will in a following letter. I do want to get this in the mail as soon as possible. Keep up the good work.

The contents of this letter should indicate his capability as a scientific investigator and why I was so rightly pleased to have his proffered co-operation. Unhappily, the proposed astral projection experiment had to be postponed for a number of reasons, some of which were specified in a letter I received from Dr. Ian Stevenson, dated February 24, in which he said, in part:

It is my feeling that it would be premature to plan for a large-scale experiment until we have checked out the capacities of the subjects (names withheld) somewhat further in informal observations . . . I do think we ought to have such preliminary evidence of an objective kind before involving the Parapsychology Foundation in very great expense, which the programme you envisage would entail. . . .

The time may well come when we shall want to undertake something of a larger kind, such as you have outlined. We should certainly want to plan such a programme rather far in advance so as to be sure to make the best possible use of the time and funds which would be contributed. . . .

If I seem to approach this subject somewhat cautiously, note that you now know me well enough to understand that this does not imply any lack of enthusiasm for the subject. **Indeed, I am quite convinced that further studies of out-of-the-body experiences can contribute important additional evidence of Survival.** And I hope that we can gradually push ahead with this line of investigation. . . .

I enjoyed our discussion very much (on a then recent visit made to Charlottesville, Virginia), and was sorry that our time was so short. I look forward to seeing you again soon. I have been looking through your book with the greatest interest (*How to Make ESP Work for You*) and am grateful to you for having given me a copy.

When I informed Bob Swope of the postponement of this research project, he wrote me, in part, as follows, on March 26, 1965:

. . . I sympathise with your anxiety at the necessity to postpone the research plan for April 28. Frankly, I think this may be for the betterment of the final research programme since you will now have time to discuss participation by Sylvan Muldoon (one of the great pioneers in "astral travel," whose book, written with Dr. Hereward Carrington, *The Case for Astral Projection*, is regarded as a classic in its field). I feel such an activity should only be undertaken with individuals of unquestionable ability. . . .

As I mentioned during your last visit, while you were in California, I have access to several types of reproduction machines. In this regard, I would be happy to reproduce any material which might be useful for evaluation at this end of the line and return the originals to you. I can run forty pages at a time with little effort so don't hesitate to let me know if I can be of assistance. . . .

Swope then gave his day and night 'phone numbers and concluded this letter with the following personal statement:

> Someday, Sherman, we will find the *one white crow*; then we can prove that all crows aren't black. A true psychic who can produce irrefutable results under laboratory conditions will be just as difficult to locate. So keep trying and rest assured that you have my support in your work.

All the foregoing is necessary as a stage setting for what is to follow. After Decker's surprise visit to me in my home, I wrote a long letter to Bob, the pertinent parts of which I present here.

I told him that Decker had been brought across country by Becker and wife from Sierra Vista, Arizona; that Decker had said he had wanted to see me in Los Angeles, but when he got around to it he learned I had left. He further reported that he had either spoken to Bob on the 'phone, or had had a letter from him, or both. I stated that, after having spent an afternoon and evening talking with Decker, I liked him personally and was convinced he was sincere.

However, I was concerned over Decker's announced plan to bring Tony Agpaoa to the States and have him operate for a $100 fee, on some two hundred patients who had been lined up. While it did not appear that Tony could get to the States due to complications that had arisen with Belk, I could see that Decker was still privately hopeful something would happen to enable him to bring Tony over, in the foreseeable future. Should such a thing happen, I expressed myself to Bob as follows:

> I have told Decker, if Tony *should* come, that he (Decker) should contact *you*, and take *your* advice about the way Tony should be handled. Personally, I would hope that Tony does not come (until later) and that the ESP Research Associates Foundation can make an arrangement with Decker which will afford some control of the situation. Otherwise the press will crucify Tony and the wrong kind of reports get out, which you well know will happen. The foundation cannot suffer because experiments should be conducted in private, *by medical men and scientists, and no publicity released until the case* (for Tony) *has been proved.*

Referring to Belk, in another section of the letter, because so many friends as well as scientists and doctors who knew him

had consistently warned me, I made this frank statement to Bob:

> In Chicago, recently, I talked with Henry Belk, who had gone to the Philippines after Decker, and tried to bring Tony back with him. Belk is convinced that psychic surgery is on the level but agrees it has to be seen to be believed—pictures do not do it justice. (Decker showed me colour photographs).
>
> Belk has been helpful to me in founding my foundation but, confidentially, I cannot afford to have him directly connected. He is too erratic, eccentric and impulsive, however well he means. No tact, no diplomacy, and not much consideration where others are concerned—a driving desire to do things his way which usually ends up in antagonising many.

This was my conviction at the time of writing to Swope on October 24. It was further substantiated when I received a letter from Henry several days later, enclosing a copy of a letter he had written to Tony Agpaoa, on October 26, demanding the return of plane tickets, totalling over $1,000.

In this letter, Henry had bluntly told Tony:

> You have not been fair to me. If this is your custom, I was justified in not advancing other cash for your trip. You turn out to be the unreliable one, not me. Surely misuse of judgment, moral turpitude will reflect on your spiritual healing mission. Your "Protector" knows what is right and wrong. You have already lost part of your divinely bestowed power, as a reprimand. A hint to the wise, they say, is sufficient. Surely you and Gines, your attorney, both possess a conscience to know right and wrong, what is honest and dishonest, fair and unfair. . . .
>
> Your mission will become a fiasco. There are laws in this world as well as the other. If you mistreat me further, I call on justice from the world above to help me.

At this point, Henry was still adamant in his determination to get his money back and to have nothing more to do with Tony. In an accompanying letter, he said he had decided to arrange with Tolentino to bring possibly Terte or Mercado to the States, instead of Tony, and have *them* examined by top medical authorities.

Tolentino, himself, had spoken against Tony and had recom-

mended some of the mediums who were members of the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas. It was clear to me that jealousies and frictions existed and that Belk should avoid involvement with either side. I also regretted that Henry should be pressing Tony so hard for the return of money on his ticket, while assailing Tony's lack of integrity, when I did not feel that this was the point at issue or the cause of the economic misunderstanding.

About the same time I had written the letter to Swope about Decker, I had also written to Belk. This brought an electrifying change in Henry's attitude. He wrote to me at once, accepting my evaluation of Decker and Swope, and suggesting that we team up and go to the Philippines, if possible, for a further study of the psychic surgery phenomena. I had begged Henry to relent his attitude towards Tony, to give him the benefit of every doubt, until he could determine personally Tony's side of the story, and what had really happened to cause his failure to meet Henry in Japan, and to go on with him to the States.

I had further stated that I hoped, somehow, to make it possible for Decker to get back to the Philippines, if Henry decided to return. At the time of writing, I had not been thinking seriously of making the trip. It had not seemed a possibility since my foundation still lacked resources to send me and I did not have sufficient capital of my own to spend on such a venture.

Now, however, Henry said in his letter:

> My foundation is tax exempt, so keep yours in abeyance until it is available. I want you to go with me to the Philippines. I want you to do the book on this psychic surgery business, based on genuine evidence. But you'll have to see it yourself to write about it. I have all the equipment, cameras, etc., but there is no time for waiting. Can you go in January? It will require at least three weeks' study; much more, without my already established contacts. If anything is ever to be done, the time is NOW—no ifs or whens. That's probably why you are a lecturer and not a business man. Make up your mind. If you are ready—let's go!

This was a time for decision. I had just received a note from Decker, in which he had written:

> I believe and feel that God's work is being done by you and your group, and by me, to the best of my ability, with the help of the Almighty. I am very happy that you are agreeing to help in every way possible, and I am sure that all will turn out well.
>
> As you know, I'll co-operate to the best of my ability with ALL, to bring a higher understanding to all the world.
>
> "I look forward to meeting Belk. He had a nice story in *Fate* magazine for January. Yours also we found very interesting. I have not heard a word from Tony, although I have written special deliveries . . .

With Decker's attitude, as expressed, I felt good to know that Belk was willing for him to accompany us, if it could be arranged. I realised now that I had somehow been placed in a middle position between two sincere forces, each seeking to be of service, each with contacts in the Philippines. It was obvious to me that faith must be kept with both or neither would have a right to have any respect for me.

I wrote Henry accordingly. I asked him, since he had guaranteed to pay my travel expenses, if he could also arrange to take care of Decker's. I said I felt a responsibility for Decker, that he had trustfully left everything in my hands to help straighten out the Tony matter and that he was awaiting my report as to what might have been accomplished. I reiterated my feeling that Decker was not seeking self-aggrandisement, that if he could be used to help demonstrate this spiritual power working through him, or help in any way to line Tony up, or perform any service, I was sure he would do it, unselfishly.

Henry's reply was characteristic—terse and to the point:

> Let's forget all rivalry, here or abroad, and proceed. Tolentino will support us. Hope Decker can go with us, but I am paying your expenses, not his. You will have to arrange his financing from some other source. As you say, Decker is your responsibility. . . .

Henry went on to give me instructions as to passports and visa, the different kinds of vaccination shots that would be required—cholera, yellow fever, smallpox, typhoid, tetanus—and naming January 10 as the date for the flight, just a month away! Getting ready for our departure was hectic. I had only been out of the United States three times, twice in Canada, and once in Mexico, and then only for a few hours. Yet I had toured my home country, from coast to coast, many times. This was certainly to be, in countless ways, a new experience.

But with all my preparations, my mind was much on Decker. I did not want him to feel that I had jumped the gun on him or was leaving him stranded. Friends had promised to contribute enough money to the foundation, the moment tax exemption was granted, to pay expenses for a trip to the Philippines. A phone call to Washington brought the word that this grant was expected any day. But day after day went by until it was evident to me that time was running out. It was December 29 and we were now between holidays. I had thought, if money could be made available to the foundation, since my own travel expenses were being paid by Belk's foundation, I could afford to offer both Swope and Decker the resources to make the trip together.

In the meantime Henry wrote that he had arranged for Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, a Japanese scientist, to join us in the Philippines. It struck me that if I could match his presence with a scientist from the States in the person of Swope, we would be well represented. I did not, however, want to contact Bob until I could assure him that, if he could make his services available, his way would be paid.

Dr. Motoyama had listed in a letter to Henry, a copy of which was sent to me, the following equipment he intended to bring from Japan, with which to examine Tony:

An electroencephalograph, plethysemogram (which measures the function of the circulatory system), G.S.R. (which measures the autonomic nervous system: function of the whole body), respiration (the electroencephalograph consists of four channels) and a machine to measure the viscer-cutaneous reflex

(measurement of the autonomic nervous function controlling the internal organs).

This instrumentation, added to the scientific appliances which I knew Swope could bring, suggested a formidable arsenal of sensitized apparatus for a testing of Tony's powers.

On the afternoon of December 29, I decided I could not wait any longer. Whether or not I had the resources, I would call Bob, long distance from my town house in Arkansas, and see if there was any way possible, were he interested, for him to join us in the Philippines.

"I would give my left arm to go," Bob said, when I had explained the situation. "Give me a couple of days and I'll see if I can get some backing for a research project like this. I believe there are some people I can interest."

"If there are," I suggested, "would you care to see if you can get enough to take Decker with you? I believe, with the experience he has already had with Tony and the rest, he could be most helpful to us."

"That's a good idea," said Bob. "What's Decker's 'phone number again?"

"He's been staying at his mother's home in San Clemente, as you know," I answered. "It's the only number I have." And I gave it to him.

"I'm sorry the foundation hasn't been able to get off the ground yet," I apologised. "I'm indebted to Belk for making it possible for me to go. He understands that I am going as a free agent, no strings attached, no obligation, representing my own foundation. While we each would be independent, we would be co-operating as an investigating team, pooling our observations and scientific testings. I have long wanted to work with you, Bob, and if you can manage to raise the money for the trip, it would be simply great."

"I'll give it a good try," he said. "And I'll call you back if I can make it."

Two days later, on December 31, when I got to town, I was told there was a long distance call waiting. It was from Bob.

"I've got the money. I'm going—and I'm taking Decker with me!" he said.

"Wonderful!" I shouted into the phone. "When are you going?"

"Don't know yet. Have to take shots and stuff. Having a little trouble getting reservations."

"Do you suppose you can take the same plane Henry and I will be on? Henry's flying to Chicago from Miami, the night of January 9, meeting me at O'Hare Airport, and we're taking the Northwest Orient at 12:15 A.M. on the 10th, getting into Seattle around 3:45 A.M. You'd have to pick up the plane there. We hop non-stop to Tokyo, arriving at 7 A.M. the next day, have breakfast, and fly on to Manila, getting there at 1:45 P.M. allowing for all the changes in time!"

"Not practical from Los Angeles," said Bob. "We'll probably touch down at Hawaii en route. Anyway, we'll try to be there around the time you'll be arriving. Do you know where you'll be stopping?"

"No, I'll have to contact Henry and call you back in the next few days," I said. "Bob, I can't tell you how overjoyed I am that you're going, and how relieved and happy I am that you are taking Decker with you. Perhaps, together, we can find the 'white crow'. Tony may be it."

"Let's hope," said Bob.

"Do you mind telling me who put up the backing?" I asked.

"Well, Marjorie Kern helped," said Bob.

"Marjorie! Give her my best!"

Marjorie Kern was head of the Los Angeles branch of the American Society for Psychical Research and Bob had been introduced to me through members of this fine group. So this organisation, for whom I had spoken on a number of occasions and many of whose members were close personal friends, was behind Swope and Decker! Things couldn't be better!

On January 4, less than a week before take-off, I again phoned Bob.

"Belk tells me he won't know the hotel we'll be staying at until we arrive in Manila," I reported. "But there is one certain

way we can get in touch and locate one another. Belk knows Tolentino and Decker knows Tolentino. Whichever two of us gets to Manila first, phone Tolentino and tell him where we can be reached. He will then relay the information to the second arriving duo."

"Simple!" said Bob. "Will do!"

"Do you have your plane reservations yet?" I asked. "Do you know what day you are going?"

"Not yet," said Bob. "We're working on it. But don't worry. We'll be there about the time you are. You say you're leaving on the 10th?"

"That's right."

"Okay, Sherman – we'll be seeing you!"

I hung up, experiencing a feeling of inner excitement and elation. I could hardly wait until the four of us, Belk, Swope, Decker and myself, were assembled, for the first time, in the Philippines, ready to join forces in this scientific exploration of psychic surgery!

Unfortunately my ESP was not working. I did not sense, in advance, what was going to happen. And if I *had* sensed it, I wouldn't have believed it!

CHAPTER FIVE

TWO MYSTERIES

So many people travel by plane today, taking long hops, that a flight to Manila from Chicago may seem like next to nothing at all. But flying over our country and then out over the vast Pacific Ocean, from Seattle in total darkness, constantly leaving daylight behind for hour after hour, until we saw the first faint rays of the returning sun over the islands of Japan, was an experience for me.

Belk, who had made the trip before and was quite a world traveller, was completely nonchalant. I observed to myself, however, when I saw the initial pink glow in the sky, that I now knew why they called Japan "the Land of the Rising Sun." It was a welcome as well as a picturesque sight.

A stop for breakfast, a change of planes, and we were on our way non-stop for Manila. The weather, fortunately, was good, a little cool in Japan, but getting warmer as we neared the Philippines. However, my mind wasn't on the changing temperature.

When I have an objective or an assignment in mind, scenes and historic landmarks fade into oblivion. I can't take time out to enjoy them beyond giving my passing attention. In New York City, in the 1930s, when it was devastated by the worst hurricane in memory, I was closeted in my study, on the inside court of our apartment, working on a story. While I was dimly conscious of the roar of the wind, my wife could not get me to the living room window to see boats capsizing in the Hudson River and water lapping up over the shorelines across from the Palisades. This is the nature of my concentration or abstraction, if you can call it that, under certain creative drives.

When my writing stint was finished that night and I looked

out and saw trees down and wide signs of wreckage, I asked Martha why she hadn't told me what was happening. She gave me that hopeless, helpless look I have seen so often, and said nothing.

Now that our plane was coming in to land at the Manila airport, my mind was beginning to zero in on the job at hand. The war in Vietnam was only two hours away by fast jet, but I was already in an isolated area far removed from other world events. Psychic surgery had become the one predominant, all-embracing, all-important focal point of attention. And so it remained for the three weeks Henry and I were to be in the Islands.

Our first thought after establishing ourselves in the modest little Luneta Park Hotel, in the heart of Manila, was to make contact with Professor Tolentino and to learn the whereabouts of Bob Swope and Nelson Decker in case they had already arrived. Though we were tired from the long flight, Henry was all for jumping a taxi and rushing out to Tolentino's home, a good half-hour's drive through crazy traffic.

It might be stated here, as I have mentioned before, that Henry is a restless, impatient, driving personality, giving the perpetual impression of "a young man in a hurry." He abhors idleness and inactivity as though they are the worst plagues. His mind is never still, which also holds true for his body. When he gets an idea or an urge, he can be up and gone in the middle of a conversation. Upon his return, minutes or hours later, and you ask "How come?" he will usually dismiss his sudden departure or disengagement by saying, "Oh, I just thought of something that had to be done!"

When this unpredictable, irrepressible characteristic of Henry's is understood, you learn to adjust yourself in order to live with it. If you can't, I've discovered that the best thing to do is step aside and get out of the way. Henry is going to do and say what he is going to do and say, regardless.

The Tolentinos were awaiting us when we arrived. Henry had telephoned to alert them in advance. They lived in an old-style house, surrounded by a high adobe wall, with smudged

letterings and paintings on it. The place had an air of former grandeur. Beside the house was an adjoining building which Tolentino used as his sculptor's workshop. Standing erect, as though on guard beside it, loomed a giant statue of Manuel Quezon, famed statesman, gavel in hand, who had served as first President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. It towered over us to a height of thirty feet. I wondered, as I looked at the slight, smiling figure of Tolentino, now in his middle seventies, how he had managed to carve this magnificent piece of art. His dark-haired, dark-eyed wife, some years younger, had a quiet beauty and dignity about her that was instantly appealing. This was to be my first introduction to the warmth and graciousness of Philippine hospitality. Henry, of course, had become acquainted with the Tolentinos before, but they greeted us as though we were old and close friends.

The first question Henry asked after our formal greetings was, "Have you heard from Nelson Decker and Robert Swope?"

The Tolentinos looked at one another.

"No, we have had no word."

"Then they probably aren't here yet," surmised Henry. "We were to check with you to see where they might be located."

"Oh, I see," said Tolentino. "Well, we will tell them when they call. You say you are stopping at the Luneta Park?"

"Yes, it's not the biggest or the finest," said Henry.

"It's good, it's all right," said Tolentino. "They will probably treat you better, more personal. More like Filipino custom."

"Mr. Sherman is an author and an authority on ESP," explained Henry. "I wrote you about him and sent you one of his books."

"Yes," nodded Tolentino, "my wife and I read it. *You Live After Death*. We believe in that. We have proof of it through our spirit mediums. They give us messages. We are in constant touch with the other world. You must come to some of our meetings."

I expressed a desire to do so.

"We are here primarily to study psychic surgery," said

Henry. "We can only stay a few weeks. We wish to make the best use of our time. How would you suggest we go about it?"

"Well," considered Tolentino, "we will arrange a gathering of our best healing mediums. There may be as many as twenty of them, and you can witness their healing work. You have already seen Terte, Mercado, Blanche and Ading, I believe."

"Yes, but I'd like Sherman to see them, too."

"Of course. We will be delighted."

Mrs. Tolentino smiled and bowed. "You would like some cokes, some tea, perhaps, and some cookies?"

She disappeared after the refreshments.

"We are going to spend some time with Tony, too," informed Henry. "I know your Spiritist Union doesn't approve of him, but I think he has the same ability."

"He may," acceded Tolentino, a bit reservedly, "but he is in danger of coming under the wrong influence. There are evil forces, you know, and they can take over if you abuse this God-given power. We watch that all the time with our members. If we see they are developing a strong ego, or we find them accepting money, or if they are not conducting themselves properly in their private lives, we suspend them."

"I know you have high spiritual standards," said Henry, "but don't you think you carry them too far—all these long services and spirit messages from Jesus, the apostles and the saints, before your healers will operate? Tony says this is not necessary. He does his spiritual work—his meditations—at night, and this gives him time to operate on patients all day, every day, without waiting on all these ceremonies."

Henry was stepping on sacred ground in this area. I could feel the self-contained and always courteous Guillermo Tolentino's blood pressure rising, nevertheless.

"Perhaps there is much you still do not know about Tony," he said, with feeling. "When Tony was a young boy he was given a spiritual gift. By the time he came to Manila from Rosales, he was spoiled and donned the white uniform of a doctor and he was pleased to be called 'Doctor Tony' by his patients. The time came when he was arrested and fined. It is

good that he did not belong to our fraternity, and in fact he is not a member. What he does is all against the by-laws of our fraternity."

"That may be," broke in Henry. "But if this spiritual healing business is a 'closed shop,' how can Tony operate outside your fraternity, as he is now doing?"

"I asked the Holy Spirit Protector of our Centre General about that," answered Tolentino. "I asked, 'How come that the expelled mediums and others who are not members of our fraternity can also operate?' Promptly, the Protector replied that 'even Satan could perform miracles.' "

"You believe then that Satan is operating through Tony and others like him?" pressed Henry.

"It is possible," said Tolentino. "I do not say it is so, but it is possible. Many patients who have paid great amounts of money to Tony . . ."

"Do you know that to be true?" broke in Henry. "Do you have proof?"

"I have heard, when they were not exactly healed by Tony, they solicited the help of Brother Juan Blanche," answered Tolentino. "I think, Mr. Belk, you were fascinated by Tony's way of eliminating all discourses, long talks that you could not understand, the Bible reading, sacred hymns, and so on, which to you are superfluous and unnecessary. In this feeling, you and Nelson Decker are categorically wrong, for our mission, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is preaching of the kingdom of God and the healing of all manner of sickness and disease."

It was very evident that Henry had touched upon a long-standing sore spot and that there was little to be gained by extending this religious controversy. However, Tolentino, once aroused, continued his defence of the Spiritist position.

"Pardon me, Mr. Belk, for observing. You are not familiar, of course, with the Tagalog language, so your conclusions of our poor English may not always tally with fact. You call our spirit mediums 'doctors' and 'reverends', but we do not give them titles. They are all *unlearned* and *ignorant* and never had any schooling more than the fourth grade. Hence, doctorate

degrees are out of place. And you, yourself, found in them some human shortcomings which must be given allowances, and which in the end are not exactly shortcomings, but rather your own haphazard and too prompt judgment or measurement."

Henry was about to interject a comment, but I gave him a warning glance.

"You and Bernard Ricks, the Spiritualist gentleman from the States, made the same comment. You both said, 'What Terte could *not* heal, Doctor Tony *can*.' This is again another flaw, for neither of them is a healer but an instrument of either good or evil spirits, who are real healers or deceivers. In the long run, *you*, Mr. Belk, might be the one deceived."

"I don't know about that," defended Henry. "I've observed you, Mr. Tolentino. You're a fine gentleman and I have great respect for you, but I think you're too gullible. I've caught some of your mediums performing trickery, at least it's looked that way to me, but you have said nothing, you accept it as the real thing. Now what am I to think about that? We have not come over here, eight to nine thousand miles, to be fooled. We've come over here to find the truth. And we intend to report it to our people—to the world."

"We stand for the truth," was Tolentino's reply. "I do not blame you for your attitude because, in the first place, you do not understand our language, and that makes for difficulties, and then you do not have any interest in our sacred biblical references because, Mr. Belk, you think the Bible is a farce."

"No, I did not say that," said Henry. "But wherever I see sham or hypocrisy or fraud, you'll have to get used to me—I speak out against it, regardless of the religion—and some of the goings on I have observed here, I think are foolishness. It shouldn't be excused because your people are, as you say, 'unlearned and ignorant.' They should know better or be taught better!"

Tolentino obviously was stung by this frank comment.

"When you were in the Philippines before, you saw a great deal of Tony and very little of the operations performed by our healers who follow the example of Jesus and his apostles. You

say you think I am too gullible. Let me tell you something. I have known Brother Terte since 1948. You were not able to talk to him or even witness his God-given mediumship. When I first heard of the spirit surgery performed through him, I would not believe in hearsay. I went to San Fabian to see for myself."

"Go ahead," challenged Henry. "What did you see?"

"When I got to San Fabian, I thought it was a town holiday because of the great number of buses and several hundred passengers right in front of the Spiritist Centre, La Perseverancia. The worship service started at eight and ended at ten, when the healing began and lasted until five the following day.

"Believe it or not, 960 people were operated on for various sicknesses and diseases! I could not believe my eyes. Brother Terte, a quiet man, seemed so bold, already another personality in a dead trance and 100 per cent unconscious. Not a single medical specialist in the orthodox way could equal this psychic surgery.

"Since that time, thousands of patients have submitted to psychic surgery through him, and if he charged at least one peso since he was used by the Holy Spirit he must be a very rich man. But he still remains humble and poor. Several times he was arrested and released when no one could prove his guilt. In Baguio City, where he now resides, the city government has even donated a parcel of land where a centre is going to be built. He is indeed chosen by God as His servant."

Henry nodded. "I am not running down Terte or any of your healers. I do not doubt that Terte has great healing ability. I have brought Mr. Sherman here this time, to see and judge for himself. I am also bringing Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, a Japanese scientist from Tokyo to observe what you people, including Tony, are doing. And Dr. Nelson Decker, the chiropractor, whom you know, is coming back with Robert Swope, an astro-physicist. These are all intelligent men. They want to study what is taking place. Do you have any objections?"

"No, no!" disclaimed Tolentino, as his wife appeared in the doorway to invite us into the dining room. "I am very glad.

We have nothing to conceal. The mission of our fraternity is to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick through our spirit mediums, who must follow the mandate of Jesus, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' "

"I see nothing wrong with that," said Henry. "It's very commendable."

Personally, I was much relieved when the religious discussion was abandoned. We had a pleasant little repast, but dead tired as I was, not having slept much on the long plane flight, it was a happy moment when we arose to go.

"Oh, by the way," said Tolentino, as he and his wife accompanied us to the gate, to let us out into the street, where a taxi was waiting, "do you know where to find Tony?"

"Isn't he at his usual address, where I visited him before?" asked Henry.

"No," said Tolentino. "He's moved just recently and we don't know where to locate him. I thought he might have informed you."

Henry and I looked at one another.

"No, we'd just taken it for granted there would be no trouble in locating him," said Henry. "Where do you suppose we can find where he's gone?"

Tolentino shrugged his shoulders. "I wouldn't know. He doesn't usually keep in touch with us. I had to try to see him about a matter the other day, and when I went to his old address, no one around knew where he was. At least, if they did know, they weren't talking."

"Well, we'll do some scouting around," Henry decided as we got in the taxi. "You should be hearing from Decker and Swope any time now. *They* may know. Remember to tell them please where they can reach us. Thank you so much for your kindness to us. We'll be coming back for another visit soon."

"Do that!" urged Tolentino. "I'll call a meeting of our fraternity just in your honour and have the mediums present!"

The following day was Wednesday, January 12, 1966. We had a lost a day in our flight to the Philippines which we could not get back until our return trip. The day came and went with

still no word from Decker and Swope, and we knew no one who could give us information as to Tony's whereabouts, so we spent the time looking about Manila. What we saw and experienced will remain forever in my memory.

As we walked the streets, we passed the Baptist Mission. Henry, on one of his impulses, propelled us inside where he introduced himself and me to Hugo Hartman, the man in charge. Inquiry revealed they had mutual contacts in the States and an instant friendship developed. Henry told Hartman what had brought us to the Philippines and asked if he had ever investigated the psychic surgery being performed by the Spiritists. Hartman said he had heard of it but had not taken it too seriously and expressed surprise that Belk and others would come so far to look into it. He admitted, however, that there was great mass interest in healing, especially among the Roman Catholics who comprised 80 per cent of the thirty-three million Filipinos in the Islands.

"The Protestant Churches number less than 20 per cent," he said. "We somehow lack the appeal for these people, but if you would like to see something, since this is Wednesday, let me take you to the Blessed Baclaran Church. This is the day, each week, when the Catholics believe that Mary, the Mother of Christ, is spiritually present to grant special healings and forgiveness in return for confessions, penance and contributions. Over *eighty thousand* men, women and children start coming, before daybreak, to this mammoth cathedral which is a block in length and has an auditorium seating five thousand. They tie up traffic in every direction for half a mile. Police officers keep cars out of the area, and thousands proceed on foot, coming and going all day long and far into the night. The streets are packed from store front to store front, and spilled over into yards or parks. Would you care to witness this?"

"Take us to it!" said Henry.

We went in Hartman's car and, as he had stated, we had to park blocks from the church and join the throng. We passed thousands who had already been to make their confessions and supplications and were on their way home. We saw the lame,

the halt and the blind, the inexpressibly poor, every imaginable type and some impossible to imagine. Signs of poverty were everywhere, hands outstretched on all sides, mute appeals in the eyes, "Please, centavos for the Virgin Mother!" and nuns passing through the crowds with cloth containers, on long sticks. Rosaries were being sold, and crosses and beads, all to be blessed, with flowers, to be laid at the stone feet of Christ.

As we neared the great church itself, the press of mass humanity became momentarily oppressive. It was a warm day. We looked into worried, haggard, pain-racked, fearsome, guilt-ridden, perspiring faces. A brown-skinned shoe-shine boy blocked our path. "Shine, sir?" We shook our heads and he bowed, saying politely, "Perhaps tomorrow, sir?"

At the far entrance to the cathedral, which was open, a long line of men and women had formed and was proceeding slowly, painfully, on its knees, on the hard marble floor, worn smooth by thousands of knees in past years. The women outnumbered the men, ten to one, and they were counting their beads as they crawled along. They had a long, tortuous way to go, almost a block, before they would reach the altar where priests were chanting in Latin, English and Tagalog languages. If I had been a priest I would have forgiven them anything when they finally arrived before me, many with knees bleeding and bruised, and hosiery ruined. Along the sides of the huge cathedral the rows of confession booths were full, with each priest listening to two confessions at a time. Special absolution was being granted on a massive scale. The lighted candles, the rosaries, the "Hail Marys" were something to see and hear.

Those seeking physical healings, and they seemed to be far in the majority, entered with expressions of high hope. I saw many depart in tears of profound disappointment and dejection, friends and relatives helping the crippled and the blind, their prayers unanswered, but "next Wednesday" they would try again. Perhaps God would relent, perhaps the Mother of Christ would hear their plea, perhaps their sins would be forgiven, and their infirmities would be healed—*next Wednesday*.

I could begin to understand now why many Catholics had

become Spiritists, had joined Professor Tolentino's Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas fraternity, since there was such promise of healing through the psychic treatments and bare-hand operations of their spirit mediums.

As I studied the thousands, swarming about the cathedral seeking surcease from mental and physical ills, the universal appeal of healing hit me with impelling impact. A panoramic vision came to mind of a sick humanity, something wrong with the majority of human creatures in all lands. If it is not disease that is devastating mankind it is man, himself, with his killings, his murders, and many acts of lust and violence.

"What a troubled planet!" I found myself thinking. "There are millions and millions of human creatures like these poor, distressed souls. If there *are* higher beings, like the Spiritists believe, why should they bother to concern themselves with trying to help or guide them? Or, to demonstrate through them, that higher powers *do* exist? Why not let them exterminate themselves? A mighty blast of insecticide might do more good.

"And yet, there must be something worth preserving in even the lowest and most depraved, if discarnate beings are really attempting to get through to them and work with them. But, the Spiritists say there are evil as well as good forces vying for control. They accuse Tony, because he is not one of them, as being possibly allied with Satan. If both are apparently doing good, how is one to tell the difference? What is the answer?"

These philosophic questions came crowding in upon me. As we left this indescribable scene at the Church of the Blessed Baclaran, I could see that tormented minds and bodies, particularly of those whom Professor Tolentino had termed the "unlearned and the ignorant," must have something upon which to lean, to look up to, to reach out for, to give them the urge to keep on living and hoping. If the Spiritists felt that they were communicating, through their messengers, directly with Jesus, the different apostles and the saints, and if this gave them comfort and inspiration, who should say them nay?

Later that day, Henry and I were led to visit the Christian

Culture Exhibit in Manila's new educational building, and there, carved on the walls of this magnificent structure, were these words:

Changing as the ways of people change,
The same God changes in different lands,
And with different names, seen as it were
By different eyes, as time changes,
For when they look—
Men are different.

As they look, they look with different eyes,
And what they see, they humanise;
God of the mountains, God of the deep,
God of the harvest—
Gods they can keep.

Numerous are His names,
As innumerable as the colour
In people's eyes.

Out of the sea, out of the sea,
God came resplendent,
Longing for me.

But how is one to find,
How is one to know?
There are so many ways
Where one is to go.

So many ways! The poignant, never-ending search for God, for understanding of self, of one's relationship to a higher power, what Tony and the Spiritists, however different their practices and points of view, called "the God-power," "the Holy Spirit," their "Protector."

Could it be possible that here in the Philippines, as had been reported in other supposedly backward countries, like South Africa, India and Brazil, an intelligent force was functioning through the minds and bodies of native peoples, which might be indicative of powers like Jesus and other great spiritual

leaders had been professed to possess? Or had we been foolhardy in coming this long distance to investigate these alleged phenomena?

I could hardly wait to be engaged in the research, to be able to see for myself what Henry and Nelson Decker and others had told me about these psychic surgeons. Could it really be true, or was it some sort of clever sleight-of-hand, hypnotic illusion or, up to now, inexplicable hoax? Mankind had been tricked, had been deceived, disillusioned so many times, when about to place faith in some supposed revelation or new spiritual idea.

Certainly this seemed to be the time of all times in the earth's history when some great breakthrough of a spiritual nature was needed to give new faith to humanity. Could one dare hope in this materialistic world that such a thing might happen?

Late that afternoon, failing any word from Decker and Swope, and not being able to locate Tony, I was urged to telephone Alfred Heron, son of the Lawrence Herons of Chicago, whom I remembered as having told me of his association with Esso Standard Oil in Manila. I got him on the line and received, at once, a cordial invitation for Henry and me to have dinner with his wife and family at their home that night. "I'll send our car and our chauffeur, Sosimo, to pick you up at six," he said. "And to relieve your mind, I am well acquainted with Tony, and believe I can help you find him!"

CHAPTER SIX

A SURPRISE TWIST

OUR TRIP to the Heron home was along the Boulevard fronting on Manila Bay. The sky was lit by one of the famous yellow sunsets, seen only in that part of the world. It was the yellowest kind of a yellow, bathing every object on land and sea with it. On the ocean side there were boats of every description, silhouetted on the watery horizon, extending for miles. On the land side, there were squalid huts, beach chairs, roadside stands, slat-board, makeshift houses, corrugated tin roofs, slapped together shanties, broken by stretches of great office buildings and swanky apartment houses and night clubs—a strange representation of poverty and plenty, closely integrated.

As we turned away from the Bay towards the residential district, we ran into a traffic jam occasioned by the thousands of Filipinos still streaming to the great Catholic church, the Blessed Baclaran, to attend the confessional masses. The streets were narrow and every passing car was almost a paint-scraping experience, with much honking, starting and stopping.

Sosimo, the Herons' skilled chauffeur, jockeyed us through the constantly changing obstacle course. We learned he had enlisted at the age of sixteen to fight the Japs at Mindanao. Then, after World War II, he had re-enlisted in appreciation of what the Americans had done for his Philippine people, and had fought a year in Korea.

As we drove away from the Bay area, we observed that the homes of the well-to-do were all surrounded by high stone walls, protected by armed guards at the gates. No one was admitted who was not recognised. The Herons lived inside a walled residential district, with armed police officers patrolling

the streets and at the main entrance. Their home was spacious and beautifully appointed. Dinner was served by two smiling Filipino women. The Herons, Al and Betty, were the most gracious of hosts. They had three children, all lively, well-behaved boys. The older two met us in their pyjamas and then retired for the night.

Henry explained to the Herons the difficulties which had arisen between Tony and his attorney, Sammy Gines. Al viewed the matter with extreme seriousness. He said if a person offended the national honour of the Filipinos, gave them the impression he did not respect their race or their integrity, it was an almost unforgivable offence. It was Al's opinion that Henry would have a hard time making amends.

"I suggest you do not go out to see Tony at first," he said. "Let me take Sherman out and introduce him on his own. Let Sherman get acquainted with Tony and Gines, and see if he can win their confidence and soften their attitude towards you."

"That's all right with me," said Henry. "If I can't make up with Tony, it will be worth the trip just to have Sherman and Dr. Motoyama, who is arriving tomorrow from Japan, see him operate, and to get their evaluation of his work."

The next morning, early, I called at Al Heron's Esso office as he had instructed, and met his attractive Filipino secretary, Edith, a highly intelligent, expert stenographer who volunteered to handle any correspondence I might need to take care of during my stay. I told her I would like to have someone like her in the States, as excellent secretaries were at a premium in every country. She said: "You are going out to see Tony. I have seen him and I don't believe it!"

"You don't?" I said. "You mean, you've seen him operate?"

"Yes, Mr. Heron took me out."

"What did you see him do?"

"Oh, open up the stomach, and things like that."

"Well, if you saw it, how do you explain it?"

She smiled and rolled her dark eyes. "I don't know – I just don't believe it."

Heron laughed. "She has a right to her opinion. Lots of

people see it and don't believe it. But *I* do. I've been out and watched Tony many times and I know people he has operated on. Come on, Sherman, are you ready? Let's go!"

It was a bouncy ride to Tony's, with many turns, en route to Quezon City, a good half-hour's drive from the heart of Manila. As usual traffic was wild. Cars and jitneys would race towards each intersection, often unprotected by traffic lights, as though there would be no stopping. At the last moment brakes would be applied and head-on crashes miraculously avoided. Al employed the same tactics. "When in the Philippines," he grinned, "you have to learn to do as the Filipinos do. That's the only way to get along!"

Arriving finally at Tony's, I found him to be living with his wife, Lucy, and two-year-old son, in a plain, one-storey house, surrounded by a metal fence, and situated across from an electric power station, on a side road. As we drove into the yard, there was a patio, under cover, where patients were seated, waiting to be examined, treated or operated upon. They smiled and nodded as Al Heron took me past them and into the house. I saw some who seemed to be in pitiful shape, with badly crippled or emaciated bodies.

As we entered the house, I found myself in a reception room which was also used, I learned later, as a dining room, when it was possible to find time to eat. To the left was a bedroom, and to the right, a door leading into the kitchen. Straight ahead was a hallway. You passed the door to the bathroom on the right, in this hall, and straight ahead was a door to the little back room where Tony's operations were performed. If you turned left at this point, there was an entrance into a living room which was usually filled with more patients. The atmosphere of Tony's home, my first time in it, and all times thereafter, resembled a small Grand Central Station, with men, women and children moving around in it, occupying every available chair and davenport, and some sitting or lying on the floor.

"It looks like Tony's doing an operation now," observed Al, as he saw the operating room door to be closed. "We'll have to wait a few minutes."

There was no place to sit down, so we simply stood in the hallway, being curiously eyed by many of the patients.

"Was this American coming for an operation, too?"

Suddenly, the door in front of us opened and I was due for a major surprise. *The first person to put in an appearance was Bob Swope, closely followed by Nelson Decker!*

They stopped short and stared at me, as I did at them.

"Well, hello!" said Bob, and extended his hand. His shirt front was blood-spattered and he was dripping with perspiration. "When did you get here?"

"The question is, when did *you* men get here?" I asked.

"Let's see—when was it?" said Bob, turning to Nelson. "I've lost track of time—so much has been going on here, night and day."

Decker looked vague. "I don't know myself. I guess it was . . . let's see, what day is this? Thursday? It must have been last Sunday."

"Yes, it was Sunday," said Bob.

"We got here Tuesday," I said. "Got in touch with Tolentino, as agreed, but he had had no word from you."

Neither Decker nor Swope made a comment for a moment. I look from one to the other and Decker looked back to Swope.

"Yes, we came straight out here and went to work," said Bob. "We've been taking photographs and making records. It's been fabulous, unbelievable. We've been working around the clock. We figured, when you got here, you'd come out here and we'd meet anyway."

"Where are you stopping?" was my next question. I was looking directly at Decker, but he did not answer. He looked again to Swope.

Bob hesitated. "We don't know," he said.

"Don't know?" I repeated.

"No, we don't like the hotel where we're at, and we're moving tonight. We'll have to let you know later."

It didn't require extra-sensory perception for me to sense this strangely reserved attitude. I exchanged glances with Al Heron who had been standing quietly beside me. He shook his head as

much as to say, "I don't know what this is all about." Nor did I.

At this moment, Tony emerged from the operating room with his patient, a woman who had just had an abdominal operation. Al introduced me to him and Tony, taking my hand, said, with a smile: "Oh, yes, Mr. Sherman. I have heard about you. Mr. Decker and Mr. Swope have been telling me. Where is Mr. Belk? Didn't he come with you?"

"Yes, he is here at the Luneta Park Hotel," I said. "He sends his regards. He plans to be out later, perhaps tomorrow."

"I see," said Tony. "Well, Mr. Sherman, you are welcome. Make yourself at home. I will be operating again in a few minutes. Would you like to see?'

"Very much," I said.

Tony bowed and went out into the patio with patients following and crowding around him, clamouring for attention. I had been fascinated at first sight of him, a well-proportioned young man, about eleven stone in weight, attired in a white sports shirt with some blood stains on it, pleasant, full face with kindly yet penetrating eyes, and soft, pliable hands, the fingers suggestive however of unusual strength and dexterity.

I turned back once more to Swope and Decker, who had moved with me into the living room which had been partially vacated by those who had trailed after Tony.

"Well, Bob," I said, "what do you think? Was it worth the trip?"

"Man, I should say!" Bob replied. "We've got the white crow all right!"

"You're sure?"

"Positive! Decker and I have some great pictures of many types of operations. Fantastic! We've also got case histories and pathological specimens. When we get back to the States with this evidence – we can really go places!"

"I'm delighted to hear it," I said. "This was my hope when I urged you to go with us. And I'm glad you were able to bring Decker with you."

"So am I," said Decker, the first time he had ventured a remark.

"Perhaps we can have lunch together," I proposed. "I'd like to get a report on your four days here. We had been waiting word from you. Since Tony had moved, we didn't know where to find him until we contacted Mr. Heron."

"That so?" said Bob. "*Decker* knew where he was."

"I knew quite a few people over here from last time," Decker explained. "It wasn't hard to locate him."

"It was for us," I said. "It doesn't matter. We're together now. Neither of you has met Henry Belk, as yet. I'd like to set up a meeting so we can work out co-operative plans."

This suggestion met with no response and created an awkward silent moment.

"We're terribly busy as you can see," said Bob. "We haven't much time. Our cameras are set up in the operating room and we jump every time Tony takes a patient in. We photograph every case that doesn't object having pictures taken. Besides, I understand Tony and Mr. Belk are not on good terms." This comment was made testily.

"That's true," I admitted. "But we hope to straighten that out in the next few days."

"Well, I can't give you an answer on a meeting at this time. It depends on how rushed we are." Bob looked around. "Here's Tony now—he's going in for another operation. Excuse us!"

Swope and Decker followed in behind Tony and a woman patient, who was trailed by some of her friends and relatives. I stood, in a momentary quandary as to what to do, until Al took my arm.

"Come on," he said. "Tony said you were welcome. He doesn't object to anybody watching. I've been in here with as many as twenty or thirty jammed in this little room."

"Good-bye to sanitation!" I said. "How does he avoid infection?"

"Don't ask me!" grinned Al, "but he does. I don't know of a case of infection since he's been operating, in seventeen years?"

In the next half-hour I saw two operations. In the first, Tony removed an ovary from the uterus, taking all of five minutes to

do it. Though Decker and Belk had described similar operations and shown me still pictures, it did not compare, of course, to an actual eye view—but I was no more able to explain what I saw.

In the second operation, Tony removed polyps from a woman's nose. He sat her upright in a chair, fully conscious, stepped behind her, placed his hands on either side of the nose, started massaging it with his fingers. There was a sudden rush of blood as the nose opened up. The woman gagged with blood running down inside her mouth. Tony worked swiftly. His fingers seemed to know exactly what they were doing as they invisibly cut the polyps loose.

Then he motioned to a friend of the woman's who was looking on, had her pick up a forceps, instructed her to get hold of the polyps and pull them from the nostrils. This she did, dropping them in a basin held by Louie, Tony's cousin, who acted as his assistant.

Tony then pressed forefingers against the side of the patient's nose, which closed as quickly as it had apparently been opened. When Louie wiped the blood from the patient's face, there was no sign of a scar. The woman got up and walked out, as though nothing had been done to her. I asked her if she felt any pain. She smiled and said, "No, but I can breathe through my nose now for the first time in three years."

Following this operation, there was a lull in the proceedings and Tony went outside to smoke a cigarette. He invited me to go with him and I found Samuel Gines, Tony's attorney, waiting to meet me. We walked off in a corner of the yard where we could be alone. I could tell that Gines, especially, who struck me as a shrewd person, was eyeing me politely but warily.

"You came over here with Mr. Belk?" he asked.

"Yes, I did."

"How long have you known him?"

"For five or six years."

"Do you know about the trouble he has caused us?"

I nodded. "Yes, I know all about it. Mr. Belk has informed me."

"What do you think? Do you agree with Mr. Belk that we are no good, undependable, people of bad faith, no integrity?'

"No, I do not," I said. "I'd like to make clear at the start, I did not come to the Philippines to defend Mr. Belk. I came with him but not *for* him. I have told Henry, in my opinion, he was entirely wrong in the action he took against you, that he should have waited and given you a chance to explain why you did not keep your appointment with him in Tokyo, and that I did not blame you and Tony for being furious at him. If I had been in your places, I would have felt the same way."

Gines studied me critically.

"You mean that?" he said.

"Every word of it."

"Why didn't Mr. Belk come out here with you today?"

"Because he knew how you felt about him. He said he did not want to upset Tony and possibly interfere with his healing work."

Gines exchanged glances with Tony who had been listening and saying nothing.

"What Mr. Belk did and said to us, we can never forget," said Gines. "He has insulted not only us, but the Filipino people. He is interested only in his money. He doesn't care what he's done to us. He's not sorry. He just wants his money back."

Gines took from his pocket the airplane tickets and brandished them. "He's afraid we would cash them in. But I have been holding them to the day he might come back after them, when I want to slap him in the face with them and tell him what I think of him!"

"Mr. Belk regrets the action he took very much," I said. "He has returned with the hope he could make things right. I am sure it is not the money. His pride was involved. He felt deeply embarrassed and humiliated when he had important Japanese scientists at the airport and you and Tony did not show up."

Gines' eyes flashed. "How embarrassed would Tony and I have been if we had gone to the States without having some money put up for our expenses, and to take care of our families? Mr. Belk promised us this, but he left the Philippines without

doing it. Could we take a chance of being stranded in your country with only round trip airplane tickets? We do not know you Americans that well!"

"I know. Mr. Belk assumed that his name, his reputation, and his financial standing were enough."

"It means nothing," countered Gines, "unless he puts up the cash. Tony and I are not mercenary. You will see, if you have not seen already, that Tony does not charge for his operations, his treatments. If people wish to make a donation or a contribution, that is all right, but he does not ask, he does not solicit. However, when it comes to leaving his practice, his people, and going to a far-away country . . . you understand . . . he has to have protection."

"Yes, I understand," I answered, "and Mr. Belk understands now—and he is sorry . . ."

"Sorry?" snapped Gines. "How do I know it is not just lip service? I would have to look him in the eyes and to feel that he means it in here—his heart—before I would believe, and even then, I could not forgive. Maybe I could forget a little, but I could not forgive."

Tony spoke for the first time, after taking a thoughtful puff on his cigarette.

"If Mr. Belk would say he was sorry, I think I would believe him."

"Not yet!" said his attorney. "It cannot be done that easily. I must have a further talk with Mr. Sherman. I feel he is trying to be fair—to see things also from our point of view." Then, changing the subject, Gines suddenly asked, "Tell me now, Mr. Sherman, what connection do you have with Mr. Swope and Mr. Decker?"

"They are friends. I urged Mr. Swope to come over when I knew I was coming with Mr. Belk, and to bring Mr. Decker, if possible."

"We know Mr. Decker," said Gines. "He spent two or three months over here last year. Tony even showed him how to let this power operate through him."

I turned to Tony. "Is this true? This is one of the questions I

wanted to ask you. It seemed incredible that you could do this."

"Yes, I did it," said Tony simply. "The power will not work for him by himself. He is not developed enough, but it was done."

"This Mr. Swope," persisted Gines. "Is he a big scientist in your country?"

"He has a fine reputation as an astro-physicist with a big company," I confirmed.

"Are you and Mr. Belk associated with him?"

"We expected to be," said I. "We came over with this idea in mind, to work as a team, with Swope and Decker studying Tony's psychic surgery and the operations of other healers. Why do you ask?"

Gines shrugged his shoulders. "I couldn't figure out. They came over before you did. I do not believe they think so much of Mr. Belk, either."

"That's possible," I said, "since they know Mr. Belk has got messed up in his relations with you and Tony."

Some new patients arrived by jeepney, piled out, and started towards Tony.

"We will have to talk about this again, tomorrow maybe," said Gines. "I tell you, frankly, Mr. Sherman, you seem like a fine gentleman, but I am not satisfied yet about this Mr. Belk matter. When you hurt a man in his soul, in his heart, it does not heal so quickly."

It was now around noon-time and I sought out Swope and Decker, who had been relaxing with some bottles of Coke in the shade of the patio.

"How about some lunch?" I asked. "You know the eating places around here. Can I take you?"

"Okay," said Swope, "but we can't stay away long. Looks like some more operations coming up."

We walked out to the road and hailed a taxi. It delivered us in a few minutes to a nearby restaurant where we took a table in the back.

Once our food orders were placed, I was eager to talk. I

remembered how interested Bob Swope had been in previous planned research with the ESP Research Associates Foundation, and how helpful he had been with his suggestions of procedure. To think that he was now actually in the Philippines with us, and engaged in making a study of Tony, and was already convinced that Tony was, as he termed it, "the white crow," was thrilling.

"The little I have seen this half-day has impressed me a great deal," I said. "But you've had four days of it. You must have seen much more. What are your conclusions and what are your plans?"

Decker looked to Swope and it was now obvious to me that he regarded Bob as the spokesman.

"Well," said Bob, "when I became convinced that Tony's operations were on the level, I put in a long-distance call to Los Angeles. Based on my preliminary report, I was assured all the money in the world needed to back research."

"That's great!" said I, with genuine joy at the news. "And I'm sure, if any more money might be required, we can count on Henry Belk."

This intended extra assurance met with little or no enthusiasm.

"We won't need any money from Belk," said Bob, quietly. "We are planning, as soon as we can get organised, to take Tony back to the States and place him under secret scientific and medical study, giving him all the money he has to have. We want no publicity until examinations and all evidence is in —no commercialisation. We have attorneys working to protect Tony and clear the way for his States-side visit."

"This is all fine," I said, "and I approve. But how can Henry and I be of service? Where can we fit into this programme?"

"You can't, insofar as Tony is concerned," said Bob pointedly. "We're doing the work with him. But if you and Henry can arrange to bring another psychic surgeon, like Terte or Mercado, to the States and have him scientifically tested, we can share reports and pictures and cross check, and accomplish a great deal in this way."

I looked at Swope and Decker in quiet amazement. This was such a bald take-over without any consideration of us or consultation with us, after our planned and expected team effort, that I was stunned. Decker looked uncomfortable, but he said nothing as we sat a moment in silence.

"Of course I don't know what Henry will say to this proposal," I said, finally. "I am sure he came here, as did I, with the thought that we would be working together with respect to research on Tony. I think a conference with Henry is in order so we can discuss this whole situation."

"It wouldn't be much use," was Bob's reply. "It's pretty obvious Tony wouldn't have anything to do with Belk anyway."

"I still think that unfortunate situation can be cleared up, given a little more time," I said.

Swope shook his head. "Belk is not needed in our set-up. Whatever you and Belk can do together—fine. We'll cooperate on that basis but, I'm sorry, that's it. This research is too important to run any risk of its being fouled up."

"Just the same, I feel you men should meet Henry. He's made some serious mistakes, it is true, but there's a lot of good in the guy and he . . . !"

"I don't doubt that," said Bob, "but this is the way it has to be. We've got an intensive programme lined up. I have been working closely with Tony the few days we have been here. Decker has already been performing more operations under Tony's supervision—and Tony has told me he is going to give *me* this power."

"You mean that you and Decker are going to be taught how to perform psychic surgery on your own?"

Both men nodded, eyeing me directly.

"That's right," said Bob. "Can you imagine what this can mean to the medical profession for us, as Americans, to be able to demonstrate the same operating abilities as Tony, with proof that this power can be taught or passed on?"

"Yes, it would be great," I conceded.

It was apparent to me now, among other reasons, why

Swope and Decker wanted Tony for themselves. I could sympathise with their ambitions, but I was disturbed at their air of proprietorship.

"An authoritative book should be written about Tony and this whole field of faith and spirit healing in the Philippines," I declared. "Since writing is my profession, perhaps I can perform my service in this area."

"Oh, no, not yet!" said Bob, with finality. "There mustn't be any book written until we are ready to have it. Later, at the right time, it will be permitted."

"But how are you going to prevent articles and books being written?" I asked. "The news is already out about Tony. More and more Americans are coming over to observe him, to have operations. Public curiosity is growing. Nelson has aroused interest with his reports and lectures on his previous trip to the Philippines; so has Belk. When we get back, we will all of us be besieged with questions from newspaper reporters, magazine editors, radio and TV commentators. This can't be kept quiet."

"We don't have to talk," said Bob. "I don't intend to give out any information—not until the research job is done."

"Well, I think more than ever we should all have a conference with Henry and explain your plan of action to him," I said, seeing that Bob was so adamant. "What do you say to dinner at our hotel tonight?"

I was looking hard at Decker, but he waited on Bob's decision.

"Not tonight, tomorrow night," said Bob, finally. "But we can't say what time yet. We'll have to call you late tomorrow afternoon at the hotel."

"It's a date then," I said, "depending on what time you can make it. We'll be waiting on you."

Our luncheon was concluded. We returned to Tony's house. There were patients waiting to be operated upon. I saw Tony extract some teeth as easily as though he were pulling them out of butter. Then he did another sinus operation. By that time, Al Heron, who had driven back to the office, returned in his car to take me back to the hotel.

"I've just learned that Tolentino is having a gathering of healers at his home," he told me. "I presumed you would like to go out and see them perform."

"Very much!" I said.

"Good!" said Al. "I thought you would and I phoned my wife, Betty, to pick you up at the hotel in our other car. I can't get away, or I'd take you myself!"

The occasion at Tolentino's was something in the nature of an anti-climax after my day's experience at Tony's. About thirty people had been assembled. I took photographs of different operations which various spirit mediums performed, but I could not get close enough with my camera to be definitive. The presence of the famed Terte was, of course, the main feature. When it came to his turn to operate, I watched him with the keenest interest.

Strangely enough, I was not so impressed at his first demonstration. Terte was a rather sombre-faced little man who worked quietly and made small body openings which were difficult to see. He removed some apparent kidney stones and dropped them in a bottle. The patient got up saying he felt greatly relieved, and walked off.

About this time, Henry Belk made a late arrival, having gone to the airport to meet Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, electroencephalographic and electronic instrumentation specialist, whom he had brought with him. The two were introduced to the group by Tolentino, and just in time to witness a second operation by Terte.

Henry and I trained our cameras on him and snapped a series of pictures as he extracted a long, rope-like substance from an old man's rectum. It looked to us as though Terte had palmed this damp piece of rope in one hand, pressed it against the rectum and pulled it slowly out between his fingers, creating the illusion of its being extracted from within.

Spiritists told us that the old man had been "bewitched". They informed us that full-grown tobacco leaves, bailing wire, nails, fibres and "what not" had been taken from bodies. These articles had been *mentally projected* into the victims by *witchcraft.*

Henry could not accept this explanation and said so openly, but I, who held the same conviction, kept it to myself, feeling it was wise not to antagonise these believing people. Besides, if one was to give any benefit of doubt to what had been observed, there was an extensive literature on witchcraft which was worthy of study.

Why would Terte, who enjoyed a world-wide reputation as a healer, resort to trickery? And yet I recalled that, throughout history, some of the world's greatest mediums, who had produced genuine phenomena under strict test conditions, had, at other times, been caught in fraudulent practices! What strange influence or impulse had caused them to do this! The average inexperienced investigator, I reflected, would encounter one exhibition like this and condemn all "spirit" demonstrations as trickery.

Just before leaving, I was able to make contact with Terte personally and to have a private talk with him. He told me he had been a divine healer since 1925, and a psychic surgeon since 1949. I asked him how it felt when the Holy Spirit took over, and he said his body felt a warm glow—a tingling. He explained that he could not operate when the Holy Spirit was absent. He had a group of Spiritists who assisted him during the operations by chanting religious songs. Sometimes they held the open Bible over a patient, as I had witnessed. These practices were supposed to add to Terte's power.

Terte appeared sincere and dedicated. I was willing to concede, "rope" trick or not, that some power did function through him the major portion of the time as thousands of patients had already testified. But the mystery of psychic surgery from a scientific standpoint still remained.

On the way back to the Luneta Park Hotel, with the faithful Mrs. Heron as chauffeur, I had opportunity to get acquainted with Henry's scientist friend, Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, from Japan. He spoke reasonably good English, taking his time to select the right word. His manner was warm and straightforward, and I discovered he had a quiet sense of humour. It showed first in his twinkling eyes before he could give verbal

expression to his thoughts. We were to have many interesting and worthwhile experiences together.

I asked him: "Well, Dr. Motoyama what did you think of what you saw this afternoon and evening? Do you believe?"

He chuckled. "Yeah—no, I don't believe. Not yet. Too early. The rope—I don't know. What *you* think?"

"I'm afraid I think what *you* think," I said. "But I agree—too early yet. We have to see some more."

"Yeah," he said. "Lots more. You see Tony today, Mr. Belk tells me. What you think of *him*?"

"Better," I said. "Much impressed so far."

"I would like to see," said Dr. Motoyama.

"I will arrange it as soon as possible," I said. "Just now I have a problem concerning Tony and Mr. Belk. Tomorrow's Friday, with the weekend coming up. Sunday, Mr. Tolentino wants us all to go to Rosales, almost three hundred miles, to see an Espiritista Church service, and some healing by Mercado. It may be Monday before I can take you to Tony's."

"Okay," accepted Dr. Motoyama. "By then—Mr. Belk—he go, too?"

"Can't say yet," I replied, as Henry shot me a questioning glance.

Dr. Motoyama nodded and laughed. "Yeah—I know. Airport in Tokyo. Tony did not come. Mr. Belk very mad."

I leaned towards Henry in the car and said in a low voice: "I need to see you in private at the hotel. Lots to report!"

"How do things look?" asked Henry.

"Not so hot," I said.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MISSING PERSONS

As soon as we had Dr. Motoyama settled in his room, Henry came down to see me. It was now past midnight. We had had a long day, but there were matters of first importance to be discussed.

"What hotel are Swope and Decker stopping at?" Henry asked.

"I don't know. Swope said they were changing hotels tonight. I don't think he wanted us to be able to reach Decker or him. Both of them acted very strangely."

"Why should they?" said Henry. "Is it about me? I've never done anything to them."

"No, but it's apparently a number of things: your mess with Tony, and it seems Swope's got financial backing and figures he doesn't need anyone else. He said we could get ourselves another boy—Terte or Mercado—and bring one of them to the States."

"Terte—after what I saw him do tonight?" said Henry. "I'll swear that was sleight-of-hand and pretty crude at that."

"It could have been," I said. "But Terte's done too many other things for them all to be tricks. He'd have been found out and condemned or put in jail long ago. I can't explain what happened today, but I still think Terte's got something, and some of the other healers, too."

"Well, that's what we came all this way to find out," said Henry. "All right—let's have it! What happened today?"

"Plenty!" I said, and told him the whole story, not only about the reception Swope and Decker had given me, but my frank talk with Tony and Gines, and their attitude.

"What's your guess?" said Henry, when I had finished. "Do

you think this matter with Tony and Gines can be cleared up? If it can't, I want those tickets returned, and my money back on them, and we'll forget about the whole thing. I can go on to something else. But I want you and Motoyama to get everything you can out of observing Tony. One of the reasons I brought Motoyama from Japan was to make up to him for his disappointment in not meeting Tony in Tokyo. I'm a man of my word. I promised to deliver Tony, and Motoyama had lined up his scientific friends to meet him—and Tony stood me up. This is what burned me."

"It doesn't do any good to keep living in the past," I said. "Just give me a few days more. I have a feeling things are going to work out, that you and Tony and Gines are going to be friends again."

"I'd like to buy that," said Henry. "But, while we're waiting on Tony, can't we get together with Swope and Decker?"

"Oh, I forgot. That's arranged for dinner with us tomorrow night," I informed him. "A time is not set yet. They didn't seem too anxious but they finally accepted my invitation."

"It's a queer business," said Henry, "all these personality conflicts. Can you tell me, Harold, why there's always so much trouble when you get mixed up in psychic matters? Look at all the trouble I've had since I brought Peter Hurkos to this country. Members of my family and many of my close friends think I'm a nut. But there's a lot of truth to this ESP business and I'm going to stay with it till I prove it."

This was an attribute of Henry's I couldn't help but admire, the ability to take critical punishment and ridicule. This was something I had faced nearly all of my life, as a pioneer as well as an exponent in the field of extra-sensory perception. I had long been accustomed to the sensation of "sticking my neck out," in areas of psychic phenomena not yet accepted by the academic world in general or scientists in particular. I had now lived long enough to have seen many of my contentions proved and accepted by laboratory experiments.

Now, however, Henry and I were stepping "far out" in a field of research which, if evidentially documented beyond any

doubt, would rock the medical as well as the religious world. Swope was convinced it was true and he was a top physicist. He was willing to stake his reputation on what he had observed, experienced and photographed. More than that, he was apparently so carried away by Tony's assurance that he could be taught how to perform psychic surgery, that he wanted exclusive control of Tony and all research relating to him.

It was past two a.m. when I got to bed, but I couldn't sleep. I was disturbed at the evidence of conflict and different motivations between the four of us who had originally started from the States with what I had supposed had been one common purpose—to combine our backgrounds of training and experience on this highly challenging research project. Our assignment was difficult enough without a lack of harmony between us. I seemed to find myself in the position of a "middle man" between these contending forces. It was a situation I had not sought or desired.

Sleep finally came to me nearly three hours later, but I was awakened shortly after seven by Al Heron who volunteered to drive me out to Tony's again. This was too good an offer to turn down and we were soon on the way. But, as early as we arrived, Swope and Decker were there ahead of us. Tony had already performed one operation and there were patients waiting. This proved, however, to be a day when there were more examinations than operations. Tony would not operate on all, but depended on what he discovered their physical condition to be.

For example, a man came in who had lost his hearing. Tony put him on the table and ran his sensitive hands over his body. In less than a minute, he said: "You have diabetes. Your blood sugar count is very high. You will have to bring it down before I can operate." The man, surprised, confessed that he did have a bad case of diabetes and a doctor's statement to prove it.

I asked Tony, "How did you know?" and he answered, simply, "I cannot explain, Mr. Sherman—I just knew."

There was something of a language barrier despite the fact that Tony spoke English. He either could not or did not wish to

define this power in words. All I could get from him, on that occasion, was, "The power just *is*"—and along with the existence or presence of this power is the knowledge of how to use it.

Between patients' treatments I had several long talks with Tony and his attorney, Gines, about Henry. There were still obstacles in the way of an immediate reconciliation. It was obvious to me that the subject could not be pressed.

In the afternoon, a distraught-looking woman brought a mentally retarded, almost mongoloid-type daughter, about nine years of age, to Tony for examination. She had dark hair, closely cropped, large facial features, protruding jaw and silly grin. Tony could not get her to go inside, so he looked her over in the yard. He said quietly to me that this child also had epileptic tendencies and seizures, which the mother confirmed, due to pressures on the brain, which could be relieved by a brain operation.

The little girl was terrified and suddenly sat down on the ground and screamed and kicked. She crawled on her knees and hid behind her mother. She grasped her mother's legs and peered between them, like a frightened animal. As the mother tried to move away, the child, still clinging, dragged along on her knees.

Tony let her alone. But, every so often, between interviews and treatments of patients, he would come out in the yard and play with his happy little two-year-old son, hugging him, putting him on his shoulder, tossing him in the air, for this child's benefit. She watched intently from a safe distance, laughing in nervous fashion.

Tony said to me it would take a few days to calm her down, to familiarise her with him and the surroundings, before he could get her to lie quietly on the operating table. I asked, "What if she starts to kick and scream after you have begun the operation, since you don't give any anaesthetic?"

Tony answered: "Once I start—the power will control everything. She will not move."

Bob Swope, observing this, and Tony's handling of other

patients, said again: "As a scientist, I never thought this could happen to me. I have just chucked everything I thought I knew —and am going along with whatever Tony says or does or wants done. He is running the show and is so far ahead of anything I know or can comprehend that I just have to accept it. This is the greatest breakthrough in our time, in my opinion. We must study what is happening and get all the benefit we can from it."

I heartily agreed. It gave me hope that when Swope and Decker had dinner with Belk and myself that evening we could come to a co-operative understanding.

Before leaving Tony's I asked and got permission from him to bring Dr. Motoyama with me on Monday. It looked as if things were starting to soften up all around. My report to Henry when I reached the hotel was, therefore, on a more optimistic note.

At dinner time, we sat in the lobby of the Luneta Park Hotel, ready to greet Swope and Decker when they arrived. After about an hour, Belk glanced at his wrist watch. "It's nearly eight o'clock. How long are we supposed to wait? I'm getting hungry!"

"They said they couldn't be sure of the time. As I understood it, they were going to phone before coming. Let's give them another half-hour."

We waited, then Henry looked at me. "This is late enough," I decided. "I have a feeling they are not coming, that the dinner date is off. I regret having to say this, but I also have the feeling *they never intended to come!*"

"Did you ever find out what hotel they were stopping at?" asked Henry.

"No, I did not ask them again," I said. "And they did not volunteer the information."

"Well, let's go get a bite," said Henry.

The next day was Saturday. That night, before retiring, I let myself wonder what hotel Swope and Decker might be stopping at. When I awakened in the morning, the name "Waldorf" came to me. I could not imagine a "Waldorf" in any

place but New York. Yet on looking in the telephone directory I found a hotel in Manila listed by that name. A phone call brought the information that a Robert Swope and a Nelson Decker were registered there in Room 119. The operator rang the room, at my request, but there was no answer.

When Henry came down for breakfast, I told him I knew where Swope and Decker were.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he said. "Do you think we should go over and drop in on them?"

"It's a good idea," I said. "They could be at a nearby restaurant."

We took a taxi to the Waldorf and talked to the girl at the desk. No, Swope and Decker had gone out and would not be back until later in the day.

"Probably out to Tony's already," surmised Henry. "They're certainly working at it!"

Because it was Saturday and Tony had said he did not expect to be operating that day, we had planned a sight-seeing trip around Manila since the Herons had graciously offered us the services of their new Mercedes-Benz car and their skilful chauffeur Sosimo. We spent from early morning to mid-afternoon visiting the University of the Philippines campus and buildings; Far Eastern University; various Roman Catholic churches of historic and picturesque nature; the Manila waterfront; the great new American shopping centres; the slum areas; the governmental edifices, and the most moving experience of all—the vast Memorial Cemetery, 152 acres, containing the graves of thousands of our American boys who had lost their lives during the defence and liberation of the Philippines, from 1941–1945.

It was a staggering sight, the mighty sea of white crosses, stretching on and on toward the sunlit backdrop of the low-lying mountains and Manila bay in the distance. Surrounding us, a forest of trees, whispering like countless soldier voices in the breeze, with the fragrance of gardens of flowers in the air, and green carpets of grass for the living to tread upon as we followed the curves of great marble walls, upon which had

been engraved, state by state, the names, rank and home town of every deceased veteran. High above it all, rippling proudly, majestically against the blue of a cloud-flecked sky, were the American and Filipino flags.

As I looked, I saw that this cemetery not only bore the remains of men from every State in the Union, but from the District of Columbia, Philippines, Guam, Panama Canal Zone, Puerto Rico, Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, England, Finland, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and New Zealand.

Mixed were my thoughts and feelings that day. The realisation that we had come to the Philippines on a mission to see men healed, instead of maimed and killed. The wonderment as to the nature of a higher power that would permit man, as a creature of free will, to destroy his fellow-man, but would, just as readily, give to man the power to heal.

How little, I decided, we knew about anything, and least of all about our relationship to this higher power within and about us! This is the power that Tony and other healers called, "The Holy Spirit," their "Protector."

Surrounding all these phenomena were superstition, ignorance, witchcraft, mesmerism, trickery, magic, ritualistic ceremonies, hexes, hoaxes, pretence, self-delusion, hallucination. Yet in certain areas there were genuine, demonstrable spiritual manifestations defying explanation.

It was no wonder that average scientists had shown little patience for this type of investigation. But, I asked myself, faced as I was at that moment with the evidence of man's age-old inhumanity to man:

"If there *is* a God, a Great Intelligence beyond our present comprehension, if this higher power does exist, could any discovery in our time be more important or earth-shaking? The scientific proof of the actual existence of such a higher power could revolutionise man's thinking overnight; could cause man to realise that all races had equal access to this still mysterious and little known spiritual faculty within; and take his mind off war.

"It could motivate man to strive to live in harmony with his

fellow-man, to rid his mind of hates, prejudices, resentments and other destructive emotions, in order to serve his self-interest. This change in man's thoughts and feelings would have to come about to enable him to make individual attunement with this higher power within and to derive the untold benefits such exercise of this power through him could bring."

Who was right and who was wrong in any conflict? How could anyone actually know? How was it possible to determine which religion on earth had more or less of the truth? Could mankind afford to wait much longer before world-settling answers were found?

Professor Guillermo Tolentino and his Union of Spiritists, numbering several million sincere and devout people, believed they had the answer. They believed they were in direct touch with the spirits of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, archangels, prophets, apostles, saints, martyrs and a host of other great souls. Were they right? They claimed that their mediums could communicate with any of these beings, and that spirit surgeons took over the minds and bodies of healers in trance, and performed this psychic surgery.

My mind was in turmoil as we drove back to Manila from this unforgettable cemetery visit. Henry, Dr. Motoyama and I had been invited to attend a gathering of mediums at Professor Tolentino's that night. There was much to study and to learn —and so difficult to keep an open and unbiased mind.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENTS

THE FILIPINOS are a happy, care-free people, although many live under conditions which to us would seem abject poverty. They are cheerful, friendly and the soul of hospitality, offering and sharing whatever they have, without apology—if they like you. But they can instantly sense if you indicate an attitude of superiority or reservation concerning them or their surroundings.

When Henry, Dr. Motoyama and I arrived at the Tolentino home, that Saturday night, we walked in on an attractive group of teenage boys and girls, equipped with musical instruments, who had been singing and playing. They flashed warm smiles at us as they picked up their instruments and slipped out, despite our entreaties for them to stay and entertain us. Later in the evening, when we were taking our leave, these same young people reappeared magically to bow and wish us a cordial adieu. This gave us the feeling we had been watched, all this time, through open windows and from the patio beyond.

I recalled another evidence of cordiality displayed at a restaurant where we ate a few hours before. As we departed through a rear door into an alley, we passed four Filipinos engaged in a back-room poker game. One of them looked up, gave us a toothsome grin, and said in good English, "We hate to see you go."

For some inexplicable reason, this night, the promised gathering of mediums did not occur. The Tolentinos acted as though they had expected them. They kept going to the door as sounds outside indicated new arrivals, but few came. Finally,

Tolentino said: "There must be some mistake. They are coming *next* Saturday night." This was a keen disappointment to us because our time in the Islands was limited. But Tolentino assured us that we would have a good opportunity to see a demonstration of spirit healing on Sunday if we would journey to Rosales, more than two hundred miles distant, and attend a morning church service of the Espirista Cristiani de Filipinas organisation. This we gladly consented to do, even though it meant rising at four a.m. and going by car, again provided, with driver Sosimo, by the never-failing Herons.

Before the evening was over Tony Agpaoa and his two associates, Sammy Gines and Victor Pulido, put in a surprise appearance. Despite the degree of rivalry or friction between Tony's followers and Tolentino's union members, the Tolentinos greeted Tony with genuine warmth and deference, as though pleased to have been honoured by his unexpected visit.

Tony and his two friends did not remain long when they found there were few present. But it was long enough to have renewed acquaintance with Henry Belk and to have met Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama. Henry made no effort at reconciliation, he simply exchanged polite pleasantries. Tony pointedly invited Dr. Motoyama to come out with me on Monday and said he was welcome to witness the operations.

With everyone gone, we at least had opportunity to enjoy the good company of the Tolentinos who had recently read my book, *How to Use the Power of Prayer*.

"There is no power that can be more powerful than that of prayer," said Tolentino. "We agree with you one hundred per cent on that. To the Spiritists, there are two kinds of prayer —one to superior or holy spirits, and the other to unclean or elemental entities, when our prayers and desires are used or abused for monetary or selfish ends."

"Is this your religious conviction?" I asked.

"No," denied Tolentino. "We always say that Christian Spiritism is *not* a religion but purely scientific, philosophical and moral teaching, fundamentally based on the Spirit and not on

the letter of the Holy Bible. (He gave 2 Cor. 3:6 as a reference.) We implore God with us, in us, outside us, for God, our source of inspiration is in heaven, on earth, and in everything He created, to free us from evil thoughts, in everything we do. It is the Holy Spirit of God that gives our mediums the words to say and preach, so as to clean and prepare ourselves on the true moral way of life. This means to preach the 'Kingdom of God' and to heal the sick." (Luke 9:20.)

Henry had criticised the seemingly unending religious services preceding healing sessions. This had nettled Tolentino, who said, reprovingly: "It is the gravest error of one who does not understand the sanctity of our Spiritist meetings, condemning them saying that it is irrelevant to have preliminary procedures, preachings and teachings from the Holy Bible, with singing, thus spending long hours before the actual operations. Such critics charge that long and tiresome preaching never accomplishes anything. May I say that, through this means of preaching and teaching the Bible, and healing the sick, the truth is propagated like wild fire to the four corners of the earth. Those who co-operate with us by praying and performing very simple holy rituals strengthen their faith. I have suggested to all Americans who come here for healings that they read the sacred passages and translate them into action in their daily lives, if they would be cured of their ailments which have mostly been given up as hopeless by medical science."

Tolentino then paid tribute to the works of Allan Kardec, early nineteenth-century writer, author of *The Spirits' Book*, containing the principles of Spiritist doctrine, which have been adopted by the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas.

"Kardec says in his unparalleled writing," stated Tolentino, "that 'physicians heal and try to heal the ailments of the physical body and never the spiritual ailments which contribute to the ailments of the physical body.' "

"You mean the sins people have committed can bring on physical illnesses?" I asked.

"Yes," said Tolentino. "And they can have been sins in *past lives!*"

At this point, Tolentino "went off the deep end," in so far as it was possible to follow him with any scientific logic, in declaring a belief in reincarnation, and the karmic effect that past misdeeds were still having on present physical bodies. I looked at Tolentino and shook my head as though he had lost me.

"I know," he said, in a tolerant tone of voice. "Some people suspect we are blind religionists, which is far from the truth. We pray fervently for divine guidance, but not fanatically. All religions set up barriers when they say there is no salvation outside their own belief. Without exception, they are all commercialised. Christian Spiritism, on the other hand, sets up no barrier because it embraces mankind as a whole, since all are one in worshipping God in truth and in spirit.

Tolentino paused for a moment, to let these statements sink in, then he added what he felt to be the clincher, "All, without exception, will be saved through *multiple reincarnations!*"

I had no answer for this. I was in the receptive listening mood. I had observed what had looked to me to be genuine healing phenomena which had commanded my respect. I was finding it almost more difficult to accept the explanation behind the healings.

"Reincarnation is the logical divine universal law of love and justice," Tolentino continued. "Jesus did not establish any other religion but love. His doctrine is love and God is love. Love united with love, never with hate. All known religions are warring against each other and are therefore saturated with hatred. If you insist on calling Christian Spiritism a religion, it is a religion dominated by a universal name, love. Its mission is purely spiritual and humanitarian."

This was not the time to argue with the gentle-spirited and gentle-minded Tolentino. His wife had sat, quietly, smilingly, dutifully listening, along with me, Henry and Dr. Motoyama, too, though I could feel that Henry wanted to take issue, to raise questions, to make opposing declarations.

"I have written a pamphlet, *Why I Am a Spiritist*," said Tolentino, after a long moment. "I would like you to read it." He produced a copy and handed it to me. "Would you please

turn to the back and read aloud to Mr. Belk and Dr. Motoyama, our spiritual principles?"

I did as directed, and was deeply moved and impressed.

"God is my Father. Nature is my mother. The universe is my way. Eternity is my kingdom. Immortality is my life. The mind is my house. Truth is my worship. Love is my law. Form is my manifestation. Conscience is my guide. Peace is my shelter. Experience is my school. Obstacle is my lesson. Difficulty is my stimulant. Joy is my hymn. Pain is my warning. Work is my blessing. Light is my realisation. Friend is my companion. Adversary is my instructor. Neighbour is my brother. Struggle is my opportunity. Future time is my promise. Equilibrium is my attitude. Order is my path. Beauty is my ideal. Perfection is my destiny."

For a few moments after reading, I did not feel like speaking. "I find no fault with this," I said, finally. "It is magnificent. It makes no mention of reincarnation, or anything controversial. Anyone can accept these statements of whatever faith or no faith at all. Every one of them rings true; they find a response in the human mind and heart. If this represents Spiritism—and your philosophy begins and ends with this—I can subscribe wholeheartedly to it. In fact, I would like to quote these statements again and again in my lectures. They are profoundly worthy of thought."

The Tolentinos were obviously pleased. It was a good note on which to take leave of them for the night, since we were to get up early in the morning and meet them again, some hours later, at the little Espiritista Church in Rosales.

Once more, though it was late, upon reaching the hotel and tumbling into bed, I could not sleep. I was having trouble squaring the philosophy of Spiritism, including the belief in reincarnation, with the psychic surgery I had thus far witnessed. How much of a part did religious conviction play? And if Tony did not require these rituals, in advance of *his* operations, why did *they*?

Tolentino had promised that Jose Mercado, one of the Espirista's top mediums, would perform in Rosales on Sunday.

But Tony had taken me quietly aside and told me, privately: "Mercado will do nothing. You will see. He will not operate while you are there." I had asked Tony, "Why?" He had simply repeated: "I know. You will make the trip for nothing."

This was mysterious, Tony would not explain. I had heard that he had originally trained Mercado. Was there jealousy between them? Why should he give me such advance warning? Was he trying to discourage my making the long trip? Did he feel I might be more impressed with Mercado's work? I finally decided this was all beyond me—and went to sleep.

Mosquitos are among the best alarm clocks in the Philippines. I was awakened by a buzzing in my ear a little after three a.m. and reached automatically for the insect sprayer beneath the bed. By the time I was ready to defend myself I was conscious enough to realise I should get up anyway. You learn to live with flies and various forms of insects, cockroaches and rats in the Islands.

Promptly at four a.m. Henry, Dr. Motoyama and I found our car and chauffeur waiting for us outside the hotel. It was still dark. Sosimo said the sun would not come up in the Philippines until around 6.30 a.m. The night was warm. We were glad to see that the Herons had sent their Chevrolet which was equipped with an air conditioner that the Mercedes-Benz did not possess. We needed it as it got progressively hotter throughout the day.

During the night hours we passed through picturesque Manila streets and then out into the open country, where there were spots of light, from burning lamps, or fires along the road with dark figures huddled beside them in grotesque silhouettes. There was the damp smell of rice fields and an occasional flight of strange birds, blinded by the car lights. Ramshackle houses on stilts stood in uneven array. Occasionally we passed a horse-driven or caribou-driven cart, wheels sagging under loads of household goods, produce or wood. And, of course, there were the ubiquitous jeepneys, darting by, usually loaded with Filipinos, young and old, going some place in a terrible hurry.

It was an atmosphere and an environment so totally different from any I had experienced.

"Here we are," I thought, "motoring over two hundred miles through the night, some thousands of miles from home, to see a purportedly spirit-guided man, in an entranced state, open and close human bodies with his bare hands. Science would say, and has said, it is totally impossible. But, is it? Only time and further careful investigation will tell."

Further reflection, as we bounced over the rough road with Sosimo swinging from side to side to avoid ruts, turned my mind once more to consider the enigma of the pleasant-mannered Tolentino. He profoundly believed, not only in Spiritism, but in the spirit surgery we had come to witness. I had made notes of a strong statement of his, in this regard, which I now recalled almost verbatim.

"Our divinely-gifted mediums, under spirit control," he had said, "extract tumours, gall bladders, gall and kidney stones, appendices, stomach or intestinal ulcers or cancers from any part of the body, goitres, decayed teeth, and so on, without blood, without pain, without monetary remuneration. And the wounds heal instantaneously, leaving not even a scratch. I have witnessed thousands and thousands of such healings and operations since 1950, and I know there has not been a single casualty. A well-known judge, now a Spiritist, and a lady physician, submitted themselves to such operations and were both made whole. The latter once said that it is one hundred per cent safer to be operated on by the spirit through mediums than through other methods."

I was not ready to subscribe to that yet. Less than a year before, I had undergone an operation for removal of gallstones and gallbladder, and had been on the operating table five and a half hours, and glad to have been unconscious the whole while. My recovery had been phenomenal, no after pains, a quick healing, and I had been going strong ever since, far more active physically and mentally than the average man of my age. From what I had seen thus far, would I have been willing to let Tony or other healers enter my body, with their bare hands,

and remove gallstones and gallbladder—in five to ten minutes —without an anaesthetic and with no sanitary precautions? This was a question I was not prepared to answer although I was to be asked it by others, many times, on my return home.

It was after eight o'clock before we were within sight of Rosales. Sosimo drove into a parking place in front of a little roadside restaurant just opening for breakfast on this now sunny Sunday morning.

From the restaurant we were directed to the home of the famous medium, Navalta, where she treated us to fried eggs, bread and coffee. Present were other members of the Espiritista who greeted us cordially. When Tolentino and his party arrived by car we went on to the little wooden church up a dusty road, about a mile away.

A small welcoming committee of elders met us, among them a fine looking Filipino named Perfecto Lopez, aged sixty-eight, who presented us with "before and after" photographs of himself. The first picture, taken December 20, 1957, showed him stretched out upon a bed, a ghastly living skeleton. The second following a psychic surgery operation, showed him stripped to the waist, hale and hearty, seven years later, on June 19, 1964, no sign of his skeletal frame visible.

"I owe my life to the mediums," he said to us, as he led Henry, Dr. Motoyama and me to the platform of the church, which was already packed to overflowing with the Espiritista congregation. A happy Tolentino followed us, announcing that we were "famous men from the States and Japan." There was much nodding of heads and many smiles of greeting.

We took our seats a bit self-consciously, facing the audience, comprised largely of older people, although I noticed, almost at once, an attractive young couple, very much in love, seated in the second row on the aisle. He had his arm around his sweetheart and would press his head against hers, or stroke her long black hair, much to her quiet embarrassment. A young mother, in a rear seat, had a baby at her breast. Then there were quite a number of men and women, obviously in ill-health, who had evidently come hoping for treatments or operations.

Sister Mrs. Leonora Pangan mounted the platform as other spirit messengers, men and women, and several mediums, including healer Jose Mercado, took seats behind us, on the back of the stage. The church service, which was to last for almost *four* hours, in this small, excessively hot room, began with the opening hymn, which was fervently sung in Tagalog. Leonora kindly translated the verses for me. There were many and the hymn went on and on, without any diminution of volume or feeling.

Oh, Heavenly Father
Here we are in praise
To us Thy mercy extend
And also Thy eternal grace.

We are Thy loving children
Who adore Thee, Oh Lord,
We implore Thee to guide us
To life's right path of Truth.

At the conclusion, Leonora, under apparent trance, her body quivering, delivered the opening message, her trembling hands and arms gripping the pulpit, as she said:

"In the name of the divine Lord, I am greeting each and every one of you this fine morning. I hope you will put into your hearts these divine riches, and your heartfelt thanks for these fine visitors."

Leonora stepped behind a wheel-shaped device which resembled a large ouija board, except that it had a sizeable wooden arrow which pointed to various letters, so that messages could be spelled out. I sat beside it so that I could see it as she moved the arrow back and forth and read the spirit messages which purportedly came from it.

We visitors were saluted by the spirit world with the hope that the truth would be revealed to us during our stay in the Philippines, that great gifts of healing would be bestowed upon the mediums so that we would see many fine healings.

Many biblical quotations were then given and other women and men spirit messengers were called upon, who spoke largely

in Tagalog. The congregation sat, quietly attentive, although some of them had begun to nod. Almost all of them were perspiring and fanning themselves, or brushing off flies.

Henry, Dr. Motoyama and myself, sitting where all could see, had no choice but to remain stoically upright. Finally Tolentino was called upon. He addressed the congregation in English, "so that the visitors could understand."

He said that God was spirit and, therefore, had to be communicated with through spirit. He spoke of us as "brothers from other lands" and called upon each of us for short responses.

Dr. Motoyama, in halting but good English, said that his mother was a well-known medium or sensitive in Japan, that he understood what it meant to get spirit communication and that he hoped his study of the Filipino healers or mediums would yield significant results.

Henry thanked Tolentino and those associated with him for their co-operation, stating that this was his second trip to the Philippines in search of truth.

I simply stated that I could feel the reverence the Espiritista members had for God, and how privileged I felt we were to be permitted to participate in their form of worship; that we were all looking forward to the demonstration of spiritual healing which was to follow this service.

After our talks, the medium Navalta took the pulpit and a series of messages, supposedly from Jesus and other great spiritual beings, were received. Perfecto Lopez spoke and gave praise to God for his healing and the presence which was to bring cures to others.

The service went on and on, until finally we approached the time when the healing session was to begin. The congregation stood and was led into the singing of the hymn which is always sung to aid the medium to receive "the Holy Ghost."

Oh, come to us, Oh Holy Spirit
To us who are gathered here,
May Thy power and Thy might
To this multitude reveal.

Our Heavenly Father dear
Bless us now this very hour
With Thy wonderful work
For Thou art king and mighty Lord

Jesus, our teacher blessed,
Come to us this very moment,
Bring thou your mighty sword,
For thou art master of this earth.

At the end of this hymn, the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost was supposed to enter the minds and bodies of all healers. A spiritual fervour had been building up in them throughout the long worshipful service.

An operating table was placed on the platform and the stage cleared for operative action. We left our seats and stood expectantly along the wall, occupying special positions from which to observe the psychic surgery about to take place. The crippled and the sick members of the congregation were stirring, getting ready to form in the aisles.

At this dramatic moment, Sister Navalta raised her hand and stepped to the front of the stage. She motioned to Mercado, who had risen, apparently prepared to start his practice of psychic surgery.

"I am sorry," she said in English, and then translated it into Tagalog, "the spirits, the Lord, will not permit Mercado and his fellow-healers to operate this morning. Conditions are not right. Besides, tomorrow, Monday, is the third in the month, the anniversary of the Last Supper, and Mercado never operates ahead of this date!"

A bomb dropped upon this little Spiritist church could not have been more devastating to our hopes and expectations. The disappointment on the faces of those who had come for treatments and healings was obvious to see. They looked about in mute inquiry and bewilderment.

"But the spirits will permit Mercado to give each and every one of you *spiritual injections*," announced Leonora. "You will

line up, please, all of you who would like to be touched by the spirit."

Henry, to use a familiar expression, "was fit to be tied." He sought out Tolentino and demanded to know why, if this was true, he had not informed us there would be no healings on this date, and thus saved us the long trip and the long, tiresome church service. Tolentino, himself, appeared distressed. He had not remembered this conflict in dates, that this was indeed the Sunday before the third Monday, but he could do nothing about it "since the spirit of the Lord had spoken."

I looked at Dr. Motoyama who was taking the development in his usual, impassive manner. "What do you think?" I asked. He shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "What can you do about it?" he said.

"Would you like to get in line and get a spiritual injection?" suggested Tolentino. "It's very beneficial."

Still somewhat stunned by the turn of affairs, we slipped into the line of Spiritist members. Mercado was standing at the corner of the stage, in the back. A woman helper was holding a large Bible, its pages open at different selected passages, face down. We saw Mercado reach his hand under the Bible, as though using an imaginary syringe, with needle.

He was seemingly drawing spiritual substance or essence from the Bible, which he then, with a sharp, quick jab, would inject into the shoulder or arm or back of the passing man, woman or child. After each injection, he returned to the Bible for a new supply of whatever it was. Each person would react with a little start as he or she was "inoculated."

Henry and Dr. Motoyama preceded me in the line. They took their injections in stride, although Henry was obviously disturbed by the whole ceremony. I noted that Mercado held his thumb and forefinger together as he made each jab. When he reached me and hit my upper arm, I felt a pin-prick sort of sensation but no spiritual rejuvenation. Some of the Spiritists rubbed the spot where they had been jabbed and acted as though the experience had thrilled them. I had to admit,

privately, to Henry and Dr. Motoyama, that this demonstration had not impressed me.

"But this apparently means a good deal to these people," I observed. "And I am compelled to respect their sincere devotion to their beliefs whether I am in agreement with them or not. It may serve a helpful suggestive purpose insofar as they are concerned."

"I can't give it that much," said Henry. "To me it's just plain hocus-pocus!"

Tolentino, trying to make amends, knowing Henry was particularly upset, invited us to return to Navalta's home for a mid-afternoon lunch, which had been prepared. Henry asked if we could have a personal meeting with Mercado, but Tolentino said, "Not until later in the day." We decided that we could not wait on any such indefinite assurance. We would have to see him perform his psychic surgery some other time.

The Spiritists, themselves, could not have treated us more graciously. We narrowly avoided some pointed discussions on religious issues and practices which would have accomplished nothing, and then took our leave on the return trip to Manila. It was a long, wearisome trip. We had little to say to each other during the hard drive. But there was one incident, as we entered the outskirts of Manila which left a poignant impression upon me.

We passed a little funeral procession, coming upon it from the rear. There were several jeepneys which hold thirteen people—bus style—including the driver, all crouched compactly into a small space. In front of these there were tricycles with foot-pedalling drivers, and side-cars in which were mourners. Then there were two more jeepneys and in front of these, about thirty to forty men and boys on foot.

I kept looking for the hearse or carriage containing the coffin and finally saw it being carried on poles between some ten men. It was a small, pink box containing, quite obviously, the earthly remains of an infant. It was a quite touching sight to see such homage being paid, such a turn-out for one so young, in a part of the world where life is apparently considered to be cheap and

expendable. This was another one of the strange contradictions in these lands of mysterious happenings, so difficult for the Western mind to understand.

Arriving finally at our hotel, we showered and relaxed, then reviewed the almost fruitless day.

"You know," I said, "Tony predicted that Mercado would not perform for us today. How do you suppose he knew that?"

"I can't figure it," said Henry. "That medium said something about 'conditions not being right.' *What* conditions? The fact that *we* were there?"

"Possible, yet Tolentino apparently expected Mercado to do his healing."

"For the head of a Spiritist movement, he doesn't appear to have much control," said Henry. "Last night, for example, there were supposed to be a lot of healers at his house and hardly anyone showed up. Dr. Motoyama, what do *you* make of this?"

Our Japanese friend smiled. "So—we will have to wait until another time," he said, philosophically.

"How is your spiritual injection working?" asked Henry.

Dr. Motoyama laughed. "I don't think it hurt me any."

CHAPTER NINE

FURTHER COMPLICATIONS

AT BREAKFAST on Monday, January 17, Henry and I went over again our experiences thus far. The mystery of Swope's and Decker's conduct concerned us most of all.

"We're bound to catch up with them before long," I said. "The first day that conditions are right for you to come out to Tony's, you'll be running into them. That's why it is difficult for me to understand why they are avoiding meeting us now, as they obviously are."

"It's completely beyond me," said Henry, "but I refuse to worry about it. I feel there are some higher forces behind what is happening here and that everything will work out right, in the end. It may not satisfy our personal desires or those of Swope and Decker, but we'll have to accept it, just the same, in the faith it's for the best."

This was to be Dr. Motoyama's first day to visit Tony, but it was around noon before I was free to go out with him. We took a taxi, as this was one of the few times the Herons' car was not available. I guess we had worn out Sosimo on the long Sunday trip, and no wonder.

When we arrived we met Tony and his attorney Sammy Gines outside, at the ping-pong table. There had been a respite between patients and Tony often utilised these intervals for a little exercise. The two men greeted Dr. Motoyama cordially. I looked around, expecting to see Swope and Decker. Since they were nowhere in sight, I asked about them. Tony and Gines looked strangely at me.

"Don't you know?" said Gines. "They came out, got their camera equipment and they've flown back to the States."

I stared at them blankly. "No, I did not know," I said. "They have not been in touch with me."

"You Americans cannot get along?" said Gines, eyeing me.

I shook my head. "Henry and I have nothing against Swope and Decker. I cannot explain why they should be treating us this way. The least they could have done was to say 'good-bye.'"

"Maybe too busy," said Dr. Motoyama, and smiled.

Too busy, I thought, for fellow-Americans, who had travelled these thousands of miles as a result of a common interest, not to have taken a minute's time to say farewell. I could think of no excuse to justify such a wordless departure.

"What did Swope and Decker say? What did they tell you?"

"Nothing much," Gines answered, "just that they had all the pictures and evidence they needed. They took samples of organs Tony had removed, names and records of patients and recorded interviews back with them."

"Did they make any future arrangements with you and Tony?"

"No, they said they were returning to confer with their people, their backers; that they were going to get their pictures developed and show them. When they had further research plans made, they would contact us."

"Do they want Tony to come to the States?"

"Yes, when they've got things set up."

"Have they offered to pay Tony's expenses and take care of everything?"

"Well, they intimated as much, Mr. Swope said he had unlimited money," said Gines.

I turned to Tony. "Does this interest you? Are you willing to go to the States and demonstrate before American doctors, surgeons and scientists?"

"I am willing, yes," said Tony. "But I do not know what time, or who with, or when. It is very confusing. Apparently you and Mr. Belk are separate from Mr. Swope and Mr. Decker . . ."

"That was not our intention when we started here," I said. "Any division in interest has been on the part of Swope and Decker."

"I will have to think about it," said Tony.

"We will have to talk some more," said Gines.

"But have you any agreement with Swope and Decker as of now?" I asked.

"No," said Tony. "I have just co-operated with them as I co-operate with everyone. They came, they wanted to see me work, to take pictures, to assist me, to study, to check with my patients. I have let them do it. That is all."

Dr. Motoyama had picked up a ping-pong ball and was bouncing it. I wondered what he must be thinking. My own thoughts refused to track. I was trying to analyse my feelings. I felt deeply disappointed and let down that they had decided, for some reason, to beat us to Tony, to get their job done, and get out, in such secretive non-communicative fashion.

At this moment some new patients arrived and Tony was called away. Dr. Motoyama went inside with him. I, finding Gines free, asked for a further conference. This time, perhaps because of his observation of the split between Swope and Decker and us, Gines was more friendly. We resumed our discussion of the Belk situation and came to an agreement on disposing of the airplane tickets.

"Okay," said Gines. "Let Mr. Belk come out with you tomorrow. I think, I hope, we can pick up our friendship again and let bygones be bygones. I do not like ill will between any of our own people, much less people from foreign countries. It is not good." We shook hands and I treated myself to a deep sigh of relief. It had been quite an emotional strain having to contend with these difficult human relations.

Louie, Tony's cousin, who assisted in many of his operations, supplying cotton, basins of water, cleaning up the patient, and other little ministrations, came out to call me in.

"Tony's getting ready to operate on a woman for prolapsed uterus," she said. "Thought you'd like to see."

The woman was on the table when I entered the room. Dr.

Motoyama was standing beside Tony, in the best possible position for viewing. I stood across from the two of them, where I could look down on the bare abdomen. The patient had not undressed. Her dress and underclothing had simply been pulled up out of the way and a light blanket thrown over her, to protect her modesty as much as possible.

Tony patted the abdomen with the flat of his hand, then held both hands up, fingers extended, to show he had nothing in them.

"I am going to open the body here," he said, and placed the fingers of his right hand against the body, pushing downward. As he did so, it appeared as though the flesh separated and rolled back. Using both hands, he now quickly pulled the body open, widening the "incision." His hands went down inside and what appeared to be blood oozed out. Tony looked across at me and smiled.

"You think I am not *in* the body?" he said. "Here, put your hand in here beside mine!"

I hestitated. "Go on—it is all right," he reassured, as he held the wound open.

Dr. Motoyama's face was a study. I had heard that no infections ever resulted, but the possible chance of it crossed my mind. A decision had to be made.

I extended my hand toward the body opening. I felt my fingers go down beside Tony's. I felt blood and tissue of some sort. When I extracted my hand it had turned red in colour. Louie handed me a piece of cotton to swab it off.

The fingers of Tony's right hand now went deeper into the body, felt around, and came out with what looked like a severed section of the uterus. Not being a doctor or a surgeon I could not identify it—but it was *something* which he dropped in a bottle that Louie held out to him.

It had been less than three minutes since the body had seemingly been opened. Now Tony was ready to close it. I glanced at the woman who had been lying quietly, calmly, perfectly composed.

"Do you feel anything?" I asked.

"No," she said. "I feel nothing."

Tony stood, holding the wound open, eyeing me. "Now, Mr. Sherman—you like to see . . . I am going to count, one, two, three . . . !"

As he said "three" he withdrew both hands from the large opening he had made and it instantly closed, leaving not the slightest trace of a scar!

"So!" said Dr. Motoyama, "very interesting!"

Tony, smiling, stepped aside and left the room to wash his hands. Louie cleaned the bloodstains from the woman's abdomen. There was blood spattered on her dress and underclothing. She sat up, slid off the operating table and walked out of the room!

"How do you feel now?" I asked.

"I feel fine," she said. "No pain. I feel good!"

I had a great deal to report to Henry when Dr. Motoyama and I got back to the hotel that night. Henry also had much to tell me.

"I have spent the day at the newspaper offices," he said, "going back through the files. They are loaded with stories about faith and spirit healers, some about Tony. An awful lot of fakes—but some spirit mediums they can't explain. There's a story on Tony the time he was arrested and fined. I've had all these items photostated."

Henry threw down a big packet of photostat copies. "When you get time, go through these. You'll find them very interesting—especially about the phonies. It's no wonder doctors and surgeons have condemned what's been going on over here. If you run into a fake, to begin with, you figure they're all fakes—but that's not so!"

"No," I said, "after what I saw today, there has to be something to it. If not, then I have just witnessed the greatest feat of magic in the world!"

"Swope and Decker have returned to the States with probably excellent motion pictures of Tony's operations," I said, "and with some good case history reports. We have nothing comparable to show. Bob is a physicist with a good scientific

standing and good connections. Since we are both laymen, his word as to Tony's ability will be accepted above ours, together with the evidence he is prepared to present. I feel that we should get a medical man of good reputation to come here from the States and join us in research. I also feel we should hire professional photographers and get colour motion pictures of our own."

Henry approved of both suggestions and we took action immediately. The first step was to place a long-distance call to New York City, to my friend of more than forty years, Dr. Seymour S. Wanderman, noted for his cancer and arthritis research,and his diagnostic ability. He was at present a general practising physician.

"Hello, Cy," I said, when the connection had been made. "This is Harold, calling you from Manila in the Philippines. You knew, of course, Henry Belk and I were coming here to investigate this faith and spirit healing. We think it's worth paying your expenses for you to join us and help us observe and evaluate what's going on. Can you do it?"

"Yes, I think I can," said Wanderman, without hesitation.

"Fine! We'll make plane reservations for you as soon as we can get them. How long can you stay?"

"Not more than two to three days at the most," said Wanderman, "but that should be enough if you line up operations for me to witness."

"We'll do it." I promised. "Get your vaccination shots, your visa and passport . . . and we'll do the rest."

"Okay!" said Wanderman. "I'll be seeing you!"

Through our friend, Al Heron, I was taken to the home of Tristan Arellano, a cinematographer. When I explained to him that we wanted him to take colour motion pictures of a man who performed major operations with his bare hands, Arellano looked at me as though I was out of my mind.

"Tell me that again!" he insisted.

I explained as best I could. When I had finished, Arellano, studying me closely, said, "It's *impossible*—but we'll photograph it, anyway!"

With these arrangements completed, we had only to wait for Dr. Wanderman's arrival, scheduled for the following Saturday when we would have the cameramen present to shoot all important happenings.

The next day, Tuesday, was a banner day in that it marked Henry's first visit to Tony and his reconciliation with both Gines and Tony. There was just a bit of stiffness at the start, but it soon melted away.

This was the day that Dr. Motoyama, Henry and I saw two unusual abdominal operations on women, from whom large growths were seemingly removed. Present with us as witnesses were two high officers in the Philippines Armed Forces, Col. Marcos Dalao and Col. Ricardo Almachar, from Camp General Aguinaldo, Manila. Col. Dalao's wife had accompanied a friend to Tony for an operation the previous day. He had come with his fellow-officer, highly sceptical, to see for himself. He could not believe his wife's account of what had taken place.

Tony, making an almost instantaneous diagnosis of the first woman patient, as she lay on the table, ran his hands over her body and said to me, "Feel here, Mr. Sherman—big growth."

I placed my hand on the woman's abdomen and felt a large, hard mass inside the flesh covering of her body. Tony then gestured to the two military men and said, "You feel it, too?" Both officers touched the place indicated, and nodded.

"It is there, you felt it, you can see the lump."

Tony pressed his hands down on the abdomen and the growth stood out. "Now, I will remove it." he said.

Before our eyes, as he ran the fingers of his right hand over the abdomen, it opened up. They were in the woman's body almost instantly, probing for the growth, as blood surged around it, not too much considering the size of the opening. I glanced at the two officers. Their eyes were bulging.

"Mr. Sherman, put your hand in here, please," directed Tony. I did as instructed and brought my hand out with blood on it.

"Gentlemen," said Tony, looking at the officers. "You do

the same, please." They hesitated, exchanging apprehensive glances.

"Go ahead—no harm!" insisted Tony.

With some show of reluctance, the two officers did as bidden. Louie, Tony's assistant, handed them wads of cotton to wipe the blood from their fingers.

Tony then proceeded with the operation, invisibly severing the large tumorous growth with his fingers, and lifting it out. It was the size of a baseball, as he held it up on a piece of cotton, supplied by Louie. "Touch it," he said, "so you will know it is out."

The three of us touched the growth in turn. It was moist and warm. The woman had remained quiet and unresponsive all this time, gazing up on what was going on. You would have thought she was a mere onlooker rather than a patient.

Tony handed the detached tumour to Louie, who slipped it in a bottle of alcohol. He had kept his left hand in the opening all this while. "Time to close the body," he said.

As we watched, he took his hands away and the two sides of the opening came together as though by magnetic attraction. Tony stretched the flesh to prove there was no longer any sign of an incision. He wiped away traces of blood. Still no sign. The entire abdomen was as clean as though no operation had been performed. The two officers were speechless, even more so when the woman sat up by herself and left the table. They followed her out of the operating room, as did Henry and I.

Henry wanted to tape-record an interview with her. I have just finished listening to a replay as I am writing these lines. The woman could not speak English, so she was questioned in her native Tagalog by the officers.

"Did you feel any pain during the operation?"

"No, I did not."

"Did you feel anything at all?"

"Yes, I felt the pull when Tony loosened the tumour and lifted it out."

"How do you feel now—any pain?"

"No pain—just a little weak!"

"Did Tony tell you anything you should do?"

"Yes, I am to rest for three days, then I can do my housework."

"How long do you think it would be before you could be up and around if you had been operated on in a hospital?"

"They told me it would be two or three weeks."

"You wouldn't even be out from under the influence of an anaesthetic, if you had had a hospital operation, would you?"

"No, I guess not . . . and the operation wouldn't have been over for some time, either."

"Or you wouldn't have been permitted to get up right afterwards and walk around as you are now doing?"

"No, that's true. It's a miracle. I can't believe it myself. It has to be the work of God."

Our interview was ended by word that Tony was about to perform a second operation on a woman patient. The officers, Henry and I went back to the operating room.

This woman had a huge, unsightly growth in the anus area of the rectum. Tony showed it to us and Henry and I took pictures. He used his portable eight mm motion picture camera and I a Kodak. Henry continued shooting pictures as Tony turned the woman over on her back and went through the abdomen to get at this tumour. He again had me touch her insides, and I had blood on the tips of my fingers. The officers shook their heads. They had had enough the first time.

Tony then seemingly sloshed his hands around, deep within the woman's intestines, while Louie assisted by pouring rubbing alcohol into the wound. Suddenly Tony's hidden fingers grasped something and he said, "Now, I have it—get your cameras ready!"

Henry's motion picture camera was aimed for a close-up of the area as Tony pulled out the growth about the size and shape of a lemon. He put it on a wad of cotton, permitted it to be photographed, and then handed it to Louie for disposal. With hardly any hesitation, thereafter, he counted, "One, two, three!" withdrew his hands, and the wound closed and healed, instantly, without a scar!

It had been faster than the eye could follow. Within two to three minutes, the patient got up off the table, under her own power, and walked out. She said she had felt no pain, and like the first woman, only a "pull" as Tony severed the tumour with his fingers, cutting it free from the rectal region, deep in the body.

This was absolutely convincing so far as the two military officers were concerned. "We saw it," they said. "We still can't believe it, but it's true!"

Then Col. Dalao (I believe he was the one) told Henry and me a fantastic story of a friend's operative experience with Tony. This friend's wife needed an operation for a bad abscess in the left breast. Tony invited the husband to help him. But when Tony opened up the breast and blood started to flow, the husband fell in a dead faint beside the table. Tony continued with the operation, completed it in the next three minutes or so, whereupon the wife got up off the table and helped revive her husband!

A Mr. Ragdon, Professor of History in the University of the Philippines, joined the conversation. He told us he had brought his mother-in-law to Tony during the Christmas holidays, for removal of a tumour in her intestines. He had growths in the nose which greatly impaired his breathing. He said Tony allowed him and his wife to witness the operation on his mother-in-law.

"I admit I was a hypocrite," he said. "I pretended to believe, but I did not. My wife was trembling. My mother-in-law had wanted Tony to operate. I saw with my own eyes the stomach opened up, the blood flowed, and the tumour came out—all in about seven minutes. I am not ashamed to tell everybody now. I am an educated man. I was taught that such things cannot be. I think it's our intellect. It gets in the way."

"How is your mother-in-law now?" asked Henry his tape-recorder running.

"She is fine, happy and healthy. She says she feels as though she is forty years of age."

"How old *is* she?"—"Sixty-two!"

"What is her name?"—"Marcelina!"

"Marcelina—what?" (The last name was lost on the tape because of the sound of someone pounding.)

"What about your nose? Did you have it operated on?"

"Oh, yes, after I saw what Tony did for my mother-in-law, I asked him to help me. He removed the polyps in three minutes. Pretty bloody, but I felt nothing. No scar. You can see for yourself. When I went to my doctor, he examined my nose and could not find any obstructions. He asked me where I was operated on—what hospital? I told him about Tony and he would not believe.

"I didn't think, as a supposedly educated man, I'd ever be talking this way. The world has to know about experiences like this. The spiritual side of people's lives is not developed."

"Isn't it wonderful and significant," said Henry, "that this remarkable healing and operating power is coming through the Filipino race who, by our standards, are considered uneducated, even ignorant? There must be something wrong with our civilisation. You don't hear of our big scientists having this kind of power! To be educated is no sign you are spiritual."

A Filipino named Orofre Linsongon of Santa Cruz, Manila, introduced himself. He wanted to tell us that he had been operated on in St. Mary's Hospital for acute appendicitis, on December 20, 1963; again on June 12, 1965, for adhesions in the intestines (he could show us the big scar). Then he had been taken ill again with great pain in the intestines. He couldn't walk. He was taken to hospital, but doctors were afraid to operate in case he died. They diagnosed cancer and sent him to North General Hospital, where cobalt treatments were given every day for two months. Finally, two weeks ago, he came to Tony who prepared him for an operation. Three days later Tony took a big cyst out of his intestines. Now his pain was gone. He can stand up, bend over and run. He used to be a boxer and is in training to take up boxing again. He has his old spirit and health back. "Oh, Tony is a great one, he is the champ!" were his words.

Later that day, Tony performed a difficult spinal operation

which we were not allowed to witness because, he explained, the relatives objected to outsiders. He did, however, show us the patient beforehand, a badly crippled young man who could not walk. He was suffering from locked vertebrae in the back and impinged nerves, left by an unsuccessful spinal operation five-and-a-half months earlier. Tony showed us the stitches alongside the vertebrae from this operation.

Later, after the operation, he told us he had opened up the back, scraped the backbone and removed deposits of black blood clots packed against the nerves. He had restored the nerve endings so they would grow together, and enable him to walk again in a few weeks.

In checking my notebook for that day, I find I had written:

"The monumental nature of Tony's powers grows each day, and Cy (Dr. Wanderman) is in for the shock of a life-time! He will have to change his basic concepts entirely and re-evaluate many areas of physiological and psychological aspects. A constant procession of various types of mentally and physically ill men and women takes place throughout each day.

"Tony is unconsciously saintly in bearing as he moves among them, giving them medicine and instructions for dieting, or getting themselves in shape so they can undergo operations, if he feels they are not ready. Tony's quiet, cheerful, attentive manner is most appealing. His fingers are short, almost stubby, but strong, in a soft, soothing manner, difficult to describe. He is under normal height, good looking; dark, magnetic eyes, black hair, smooth brown skin. He moves lightly and with grace, a little on the lithe side.

"His powers of concentration are acute. He gives you absorbed attention as you talk to him or ask questions. His answers are always polite but to the point:

" 'No, sir . . . yes, sir . . . I will tell you, sir . . . It is not that way, sir . . . I cannot say, sir . . . I would not know, sir . . . I am not permitted to answer that, sir.'

"You get the impression Tony is constantly under the direction of a guiding intelligence. When I asked him if he knew who it was he gave me a significant look and said: 'I do, sir, but no one is to know yet. The time has not come.' "

The climax of the day came from Dr. Motoyama. He had brought a sensitised apparatus all the way from Tokyo with which to test Tony. He asked permission to attach Tony to it and record simultaneously the electromagnetic impulses from his brain, heart, lungs, stomach and other organs, Tony, who had a small boy's interest in gadgets, stretched out upon a davenport and said: "Why not? Go ahead!"

It had cost Dr. Motoyama some sixty dollars (about £20) extra air freight to bring the heavy piece of apparatus from Japan. Apparently it combined the functions of an electroencephalograph and a physiograph, with which can be measured plethysmogram, GSR-gram and pneumatogram. I don't pretend to understand all these technicalities except that Dr. Motoyama wanted to determine, if possible, whether any non-physical power could have a direct influence on the mind and body of others, and whether or not changes occurred in Tony's mind and body as he exercised these non-physical powers.

It took almost an hour for Hiroshi (I have to begin calling him by his first name, I have come to know him so well and have such a high regard for him) to attach all the different electrodes to Tony's head and arms, fingers and other areas of the body. He looked as if he was wired for sound, if not electrocution, when Hiroshi had finished.

"Now, Tony," said Hiroshi, "I want you first to relax your body and your mind, so I can record it in its normal state, just like Mr. Belk and Mr. Sherman and I are supposed to be." There was a twinkle in his eyes. "Can you do that for me, please, and I will start the machine?"

Tony smiled and nodded. He was a sight to behold with all the network of wires running from him to various posts on the apparatus. Hiroshi watched the dials intently as registration of Tony's normal impulses began. "Very good," he said, and turned the machine off.

"Now, Tony," he instructed, "I want to record again, but this time I want you to let this God-power or Holy Spirit, or whatever-you-call-it come into your body and mind, like you do when you are getting ready to operate. You understand?"

"Yes, sir!" said Tony, adjusting himself on the davenport.

"All right," said Hiroshi. "Now, I start the machine. Go!"

Tony went—and *it blew out the machine!* At least, there was a whir and a short circuit of some sort—and everything stopped!

For a moment there was a profound silence as Hiroshi gazed unbelievably at the apparatus and then at Tony. Finally he spoke, as he slowly shook his head: "Ah, so! Very sad! Too bad! All the way from Japan—and this!"

Then he got down on one knee and tinkered with the mechanism, but he couldn't get it to work. "I am afraid it will have to go back to Japan. No one can fix it here: too complicated."

Reluctantly, Hiroshi removed all the wirings and electrodes from Tony. When he had done so, Tony, quietly amused, made a telling observation: "Sorry, Dr. Motoyama, your instrumentation will not work—but *mine* works all the time!" And he held up his hands.

CHAPTER TEN

A TALK WITH TONY

THE MOMENT Henry and I told Tony that we were bringing a well-known doctor from the States to witness his psychic surgery, he began postponing unusual operations until the time that Dr. Wanderman would be present to see them.

Because Tony could rarely tell what kind of operations he would be called upon to perform, until his patients arrived with requests for healing, he had to pick and choose on their arrival. Some cases he could not postpone due to urgency or the inability of friends and relatives to bring their loved ones back. Transportation was always a problem, particularly if patients came from a long distance, other provinces or islands. Many of the people were so poor that they did not have the means to make a second trip, let alone make a contribution to Tony for his services, which was never requested.

For example, on Wednesday morning, because we had to wait in Manila for confirmation of Dr. Wanderman's plane reservations, getting him out of New York on Thursday night at ten and into Manila on Saturday afternoon at 1.45, Dr. Motoyama, Henry and I missed what was reported to us by those who saw it as a great heart operation.

Tony had waited for us to put in an appearance as long as he could. Then he had been compelled to proceed because the patient was getting nervous with the delay and those who had brought her had to be on their way.

I talked to and photographed this woman some days later when she came back for a check-up. Then I had her write her name and address in my notebook. Homrata S. Ong was dark-haired, apparently in her early forties, and now looked the

picture of health. Tony had introduced me to her, simply saying: "This is the woman who had the heart operation. Perhaps you would like to talk to her?"

Indeed I *had* wanted to talk to her. After learning her identity for future reference, I said, "Please describe, as best you can, your medical history and what happened to you."

"I had what they called an enlarged heart," she said, "with a fatty growth around it. It had been getting worse and worse. I was finally taken to the Lying-in-Hospital and put in an oxygen tent during the months of November and December. The doctors said my condition was inoperable. The time came when they gave me less than three weeks to live. Then my family decided, 'What can we lose?' They took me out of hospital and brought me to Tony."

"And what did Tony do?" I asked, regretting so much I had not witnessed this operation.

"Well, first he examined me and seemed to know immediately of my condition. Then he asked if I was ready to be operated on. I said I was. Members of my family were present. Tony bowed his head and meditated for a few moments. Then he drew the side of his right hand under my left breast and the flesh sort of parted, so that my ribs could be seen. He paused a moment and quietly blew on his hands. Then he drew his right hand across this opening in my side and seemed to cut through the rib cage."

"You were watching this all the time, fully conscious, feeling no pain?"

"Yes, that is right. Then I saw him pull the ribs back like they were almost rubber. He went in with his left hand and held my beating heart, and with his right forefinger he cut off the fatty growth."

I am sure that I must have shown my disbelief. In all that I had seen Tony do, this appeared absolutely incredible. But I was not getting the story second-hand. Why should this woman be lying? How could she have been hypnotised or self-deluded?

"After he had removed the growth, what did he do?" I asked.

"He just pushed the ribs back in place, then let the flesh roll

back, and everything was just as it had been before," she said.

"There wasn't much bleeding?"—"No, very little."

"How long did the whole operation take?"—"I guess, about fifteen minutes."

"That's apparently longer than the average operation Tony performs?"—"Yes, I guess it is."

"How do you feel now?"—"Just fine. I've been up and around ever since. The doctors say my heart is in good shape now."

"Aren't they amazed? Don't they want to see Tony, see him operate like this?"

The woman smiled. "I don't know. They don't say."

This was difficult for me to comprehend. It seemed to me if I had been a heart specialist, and had seen evidence of a patient restored to health by a reported bare-handed heart operation, I would cut a path through a jungle to get to the man responsible for such a modern miracle and learn what I could about it.

Even listening to this woman, because I had not seen the operation, or one on the brain, wherein Tony is alleged to have gone through bone structures, in the process, I found myself doubting my senses.

This just couldn't be possible. Yet here was an apparently sincere, honest woman testifying. I found myself in the position of many others who, witnessing Tony operate, had come away saying, "I can't believe it, but I've seen it, and I have to accept it."

Could hundreds and thousands, in a period of seventeen years, have been fooled by Tony and other "spirit healers"? Admittedly, observably, there were pretenders and charlatans. But how could you go on, year after year, perpetrating a hoax? Wouldn't law enforcement authorities and medical societies have long since rounded up out-and-out fakers, put them in jail or stopped their practices? Or had they permitted them to continue because of a certain amount of freedom extended to "religious practices"? Herein was a great mystery that was obviously not going to be solved overnight.

As a matter of fact there were many mysteries. Few of them could be solved without a conference with Tony wherein he could be asked the most pointed questions. This sort of conference was difficult to arrange, not because Tony was unwilling, but because of the hectic demands on his time. There was no privacy in his home, day or night. There was always a stream of people, coming and going, for one reason and another. There were children running in and out, people playing the phonograph, carpenters pounding next door, taxis honking as they passed, babies crying, an excited hubbub of comment from patients and their friends, awaiting their turn with Tony.

In this somewhat madhouse atmosphere, these unusual psychic surgery operations were taking place. Under these apparently uncontrollable circumstances Dr. Motoyama, Henry and I decided we would have to catch Tony, sit him down in a corner of the living room, regardless of what was going on around us, and record an interview session, hoping to hold his attention long enough to get answers to now burning questions.

Before putting these questions and answers in this book, I have just finished listening to the tape-recording and reliving the scene, against a background of extraneous noises and voices. I wonder now that we stood up under it. I marvel at the nature of Tony's constitution which could take these day-in-and-day-out pressures and surrounding turmoil and confusion, with such seeming affability and equanimity. This alone would almost take some super-human power!

It is my purpose to convey to you in as complete a manner as possible all the essential things that happened to me on this investigative journey to the Philippines, so that you can have made the trip with me, through my eyes and ears and other recordable faculties, and then form your own conclusions. I have nothing to sell, no motive other than to help contribute to the sum total of provable knowledge concerning this still little understood "spiritual phenomenon."

Here then are the questions and answers we fired at Tony, in a direct but friendly way, during a two-hour afternoon session.

Present at this interview were Dr. Motoyama, Belk, Gines, Tony, and I.

Q: How old were you when this God-power or Holy Spirit, or whatever you term this healing power, came to you?
A: I was nine.
Q: Were you different from other boys at the age of nine?
A: I do not think so.
Q: Why, then, do you think you were visited by this power?
A: I cannot answer that.
Q: It has been reported that some higher beings, invisible to others, who shone with an unusual radiance, appeared to you, invited you to go to the mountains with them, and meditate. Is this true?
A: Something like that.
Q: Do you remember how they looked? Some say they had a light around their heads.
A: I cannot say. I do not have words.
Q: You would rather not talk about it?
A: I was invited to prepare myself by fasting and meditating.
Q: Is it true that you went by yourself in the mountains, near your home in Rosales, to do this?
A: Yes.
Q: What did your parents think about this? We heard that they punished you for running off and staying away.
A: They did not understand. I could not explain.
Q: Did you really understand yourself?
A: Yes, in a way. They said they would give me a healing power if I would do certain things.
Q: Who is *they*?
A: My Protector.
Q: Now are you talking about *one* person, one being, one spirit?
A: I do not know how to say it. My Protector is always with me, since that time.
Q: Do you see him? Does he have form? Is it a spirit? How would you describe him?

A: No, I do not see. I feel. I know my Protector is there, is here.

Q: Is it your Protector—this spirit – that gives you the power and the intelligence to perform these operations?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it Jesus? Is it any being or personality we know?

A: I cannot tell you that.

Q: Do *you* know?

A: Yes, but I cannot say about that. It is not the time.

Q: You mean there are certain things, certain information you cannot give us yet?

A: Yes, you can say it that way.

Q: Does this Protector guide you? Are you protected against evil influences, the wrong kind of people and propositions?

A: Yes.

Q: A friend of yours was telling us that you usually know twenty-four hours ahead of time if anything is going to happen that is not good for you, that you are warned, in other words, so you will know what to do? Is this true?

A: Yes, that is true.

Q: Do you always follow the guidance of your Protector?

A: Yes. I did not do it once.

Q: Did anything happen? Were you punished?

A: Yes. I was a boy of eleven, still ignorant. I misused the power.

Q: Would you tell us about it?

A: At that time I could heal also with my eyes. I could look at a rose or other plants that had medicinal qualities and melt them down to the essence.

Q: You mean you could make a rose or a plant disappear?

A: I could make juice out of them to give patients for healing.

Q: And you do not have this power now?

A: I have it, but I am not permitted to use it. Some day I will get this power back.

Q: What was it you did which caused this power to be withheld from you?

A: My uncle heard that the Japanese, when they invaded the

Islands, had buried some money, some jars of gold, in a certain place in the mountains. He asked me if I could see where the treasure was.

Q: And you found it?

A: I did not know any better then. I used my eyes to see its hiding place. I accidentally showed them where the gold was—and that is when I was punished.

Q: Then it is evident that this power is spiritual, that it is not supposed to be used for selfish or material purposes?

A: Only for healing.

Q: You have not made that mistake since?

A: No.

Q: You say this power is always with you now?

A: Yes, always—day and night.

Q: Aren't you afraid, when you are operating, that the power might fail you?

A: No, my Protector guarantees it, so long as I live, so long as I do not abuse it.

Q: How and when did you first know you had this power?

A: When I was with my playmate and he fell from a tree and was badly hurt.

Q: What kind of an injury?

A: His groin—his, what you call—his testicles.

Q: They were bruised?

A: He landed on a sharp object . . . they were torn . . . people thought he was going to die.

Q: And what did you do?

A: I put my hands on him and he was healed.

Q: And your fame as a healer began from that time?

A: Yes.

Q: Could you do with your hands what you do today, the same variety of operations?

A: Yes.

Q: And you had no medical training whatever?

A: No.

Q: What schooling did you have?

A: Fourth-grade education.
Q: You speak fairly good English. You learned it yourself?
A: Yes, pretty much.
Q: This healing power you once had with your eyes, how could you use it?
A: I could treat with my eyes another patient, while I was operating with my hands.
Q: Just by looking at them?
A: Yes.
Q: Did some healing ray or vibration project from your eyes?
A: You could call it that.
Q: Like a laser beam?
A: A beam, perhaps, that may be a good word. Anyway, people would get well.
Q: But you feel you will get this healing power in your eyes back, in time?
A: In good time, yes.
Q: When this power comes back, how do you plan to use it? What could you do with it, for example?
A: What do you mean?
Q: Well, could you make a goitre disappear by simply focusing your eyes on it?
A: Yes, I think so.
Q: Would the person you are treating with this healing power in your eyes have any sensation? Would he feel it?
A: It would feel warm for a few minutes, while the growth was disappearing.
Q: If the trouble was internal, like a cancer or tumour, could you penetrate the body with these healing rays from your eyes and cause the growth to wither and disappear.
A: No. Inside the body I have to use my hands.
Q: How do you know, when patients come to you that you have never seen before, what is wrong with them?
A: I just know.
Q: Yes, but does your Protector tell you in so many words what the trouble is?
A: No, I hear no words.

Q: You mean the minute you touch the patients you know their sickness, their affliction and what to do?

A: Yes.

Q: But can't you explain how you know?

A: When the God-power, the Holy Spirit, my Protector, knows—*I* know. That's all I can say.

Q: Some of these patients come from hospitals where doctors and surgeons have already diagnosed their conditions. Do you always accept what these reports show—what the patients tell you?

A: No, I go by what the God-power knows. Sometimes it is in agreement with what medical science says, sometimes not.

Q: We notice you do not operate on everybody who comes wanting healing. Why not?

A: I am not permitted to. I always know whether it is safe or the right time.

Q: How do you know?

A: My hands change colour when I put them on the patient.

Q: Would we see these colour changes?

A: No, only I can see them. If my hands turn orange I never operate because this is a signal that the patient would die.

Q: What do you do then?

A: I either send the patients away and tell them it is not yet time to operate, or I give them some medicine or diet instructions, to try to get them in shape, so I will be permitted to operate later.

Q: Will you operate if a medical doctor or surgeon has diagnosed that the case is inoperable?

A: I will if I do not see orange in my hands—if I get the feeling it is safe and I can help the patient.

Q: Are there any other colours that show up in your hands which warn or guide you?

A: Yes, yellow and red.

Q: What do they signify?

A: They signify, go slow, gentle or fast.

Q: What if you see no colours at all?

A: I know, then, I can proceed without any concern, that everything will be all right.

Q: You have such unusual powers. Where do you think they come from? Did you bring them with you from a previous life?

A: I do not know. I cannot say.

Q: Many people would regard you as a supernormal man. How would you describe yourself?

A: Not supernormal. Just a normal person.

Q: Do you mean all of us could manifest this power if we prepared our minds, if we were dedicated enough, if we meditated and fasted as you have done and are doing?

A: I think so. Many could do it.

Q: Both Mr. Swope and Mr. Decker have stated that you assured them they could demonstrate this God-given healing power. Is this true?

A: Yes, if they developed themselves.

Q: Decker tells us you have already transferred this power to him on several occasions and he has performed operations. Is this so?

A: Yes, I have transferred the power, but he cannot do it by himself. I have to be with him.

Q: How long would it take for Swope and Decker to be able to get this power to work through them, independent of you and your help?

A: Quite a while. It all depends on how deeply they would work at it.

Q: If you had a clinic, the resources and facilities here in the Philippines, could you perhaps teach others of different races to let this healing power manifest through them?

A: Yes, I could do that.

Q: Then this power functions regardless of anyone's religion? A person wouldn't necessarily have to be a Christian? He could be a Buddhist or a Mohammedan, or of any faith whatsoever?

A: Yes, it all depends upon his spiritual development; certain techniques, certain things he has to do.

Q: Would you care to name these things?

A: I cannot put them in words. The persons training themselves to experience this healing power can only know.

Q: What did Decker have to know, then?

A: Decker had to meditate, to fix his mind so that I could transfer the power. But this is different from preparing your mind and soul to have the power come and reside in you and work through you.

Q: What about evil forces?

A: Yes, there is evil as well as good.

Q: Can you feel them around you?

A: They are around.

Q: How do you protect yourself against them and keep them from influencing you?

A: My Protector, the God-power, does that for me.

Q: You do not have to do anything?

A: Oh, yes. I must keep my thoughts as spiritual as possible. I must have no fear. I must stay close to my Protector and follow his guidance.

Q: Some people believe in the Devil. That's a good word for evil. How would you combat the Devil?

A; Only in a nice way, a spiritual way. I would face up to these evil forces—how can I say it?—look them in the eye. They sense my power, the power of God in me and they disappear.

Q: But what if the power of evil is stronger than your power of good?

A: There is no power stronger than the power of good or God. I invite all kinds of evil to stand up to me, to try to get near me, but they cannot. I do not fear. They have to leave me alone.

Q: You are very positive about that.

A: I am, because it is true.

Q: Tony, would you care to comment on Professor Tolentino and his Spiritist group? As you know they have spirit messengers who think they are in direct communication with Jesus and all the saints and martyrs. They have the

New Testament characters all lined up and can bring messages through from them at any time. You would think that these spiritual leaders of two thousand and more years ago would have something better and more important to do than hang around giving little inconsequential messages to a small Union of Spiritists here on the Islands? What do you make of all this?

A: That is their belief. They are happy in it. I cannot speak for them.

Q: But *you* do not need this ritual, all these worshipful ceremonies to cause this God-given healing power to work through you?

A: No, that has not been my training. If it had been, maybe I would believe I had to do it.

Q: Then you think it is the same God-power working through healers like Terte, Mercado and Blanche, those who are doing genuine work?

A: It is possible, yes.

Q: But there are different ways, different techniques for attracting this power? We know, for example, that healers like Arigo in Brazil, native doctors in South Africa and other countries are doing somewhat similar kinds of healings.

A: Yes, that is true. It can be done. God is no respecter of persons. He will manifest through those who prepare their minds and souls to receive these healing powers.

Q: This is very helpful to get your point of view. Let me ask, does drinking, smoking, meat eating, or sexual activity—your ordinary family life—interfere with your healing work?

A: No, so long as you keep what you are doing moderate and not to excess.

Q: But you still have to meditate and fast at times?

A: Yes, I meditate and pray each night. And certain times of the year I fast for sixteen to thirty-five days. This coming June and July I am doing a big fast and meditation.

Q: For any specific purpose?

Tony Agpaoa, the "psychic surgeon," blows on his fingers before "operating" on Mrs. Silvino Imanil, aged 42, for the removal of a malignant growth in the uterus. She had suffered pain in the lower abdomen for years.

Alcohol is poured over Agpaoa's hands after he has made the abdominal "incision" with his bare fingers.

Agpaoa "cuts" into the patient's flesh, but there is little blood at this stage.

"Incision" is completed and first gush of blood comes from the abdominal "wound."

Agpaoa extends the "incision" and blood spatters the patient, healer and onlookers.

Patient was asked at this stage how she felt. She said there was no pain. Patients remain fully conscious during "operations."

Agpaoa feels for the internal growth. The man whose hands appear on the left of the photograph is the woman's husband.

The "psychic surgeon" had to wipe his hands at this stage of the "operation" because there was so much "blood."

Agpaoa exposes the "growth" to view. The nervous husband's hands began to shake at this point.

The "growth" is removed and placed on a wad of cotton. The open "wound" closes immediately without any trace of a scar.

Agpaoa shows the "growth" on the wad of cotton to the photographer and onlookers.

The patient's abdomen is cleaned. The only evidence of the "operation" is her blood-stained clothing.

A: Yes, I hope to add to my healing power.

Q: In what way?

A: I hope, this fall, I cannot say yet, to be able to do bone grafting.

Q: Bone grafting?

A: Yes, you have blood banks in your country. I would like to have bone banks, so we can replace limbs and skeletal parts of bodies by grafting bones in place of injured or decayed bones.

Q: You mean, if this healing power is given to you, you could do this bone grafting and patients would be healed as quickly as they now are through your bare-hand operations?

A: That would be my hope. That is what my Protector would like me to be able to do.

Q: Did he tell you this?

A: No, it is the feeling I have, and I must try to prepare myself for it. Whether I can qualify or not, I do not know yet.

Q: Tony, we have observed what a tremendous amount of energy and endurance is required for you to do your operations each day. Some days you operate on between twenty and forty people, giving treatments and psychic surgery combined. Why do you not get worn out?

A: It is not my energy I am using. It is the energy of the God-power working through me. It never gets tired, or runs out. It is always there, just as much, all the time.

Q: How many operations do you estimate you have performed in seventeen years?

A: Thousands. Too many to be remembered.

Q: How many days does it ordinarily take after a patient is operated on by you before he is completely recovered?

A: I have no way of knowing except when a patient comes back for a check-up, usually in about four days. At that time most of them report they are entirely relieved of their ailments.

Q: Is the convalescence of a patient always satisfactory?

A: Most often.

Q: Do you know of patients who have not had a successful recovery?
A: This is very rare.
Q: Do you believe, as the Spiritists explain, if a person is not healed it is due to some karmic penalty they are suffering for a sin in a former life?
A: No, I do not believe that.
Q: What kinds of operations for the removal of organs, cysts, and growths, malignant and otherwise, have you performed so far?
A: Practically all that can be performed on the human body.
Q: What do you consider the most difficult operations?
A: The brain and the heart.
Q: The easiest?
A: Sinusitis.
Q: Most operated on?
A: Tooth extractions and sinusitis.
Q: What is the greatest number of treatments and operations you have performed in one day?
A: About three hundred in an eighteen-hour day.
Q: In what provinces have you done your healings?
A: Most all of them.
Q: How are these healing sessions arranged?
A: I am usually invited by the mayors or the governors of the towns or provinces.
Q: No religious orders?
A: No. Sometimes influential citizens, politicians, occasionally priests, and unofficially, maybe doctors.
Q: How long are you usually in a province?
A: A day, two days, a week—depending on the number of people needing healings.
Q: How many are you apt to treat or take care of in a week?
A: Around three thousand.
Q: How is your coming advertised?
A: By word of mouth. Sometimes it gets in the local papers. I have today quite some following.
Q: Do you preach or talk to the people?

A: Sometimes, a little bit.
Q: In what language?
A: Tagalog and Ilocana dialects.
Q: How many times have you been apprehended by the law?
A: Once. I was fined P1,000 (about £90) for practising medicine without a licence.
Q: Has the Philippines Medical Association tried to stop you?
A: Not exactly. They may not like what I am doing.
Q: Have any patients ever complained or brought charges against you for malpractice or for any other reason?
A: Not one, in seventeen years.
Q: Have you had any case of infection or death in all that time, attributed to your treatments or operations?
A: No.
Q: This is a remarkable record. How do you account for it?
A: My Protector, the God-power, will not permit infection, and will not permit me to operate if the patient is in such a condition he will die.
Q: Why do you occasionally use rubbing alcohol to pour into some incisions?
A: To protect against infection and for lubrication.
Q: Would not alcohol ordinarily sting like fury in contact with an open wound?
A: The patients do not feel it.
Q: What keeps them from feeling it? They are not hypnotised.
A; No, the God-power takes care of it.
Q: When you remove a tumour or growth, is the place where it was attached to the body instantly healed, just as the incision is healed when you close it?
A: Yes, instantly.
Q: And the patients can get up and go about their business?
A: Yes. But I advise that they should be careful for three or four days.
Q: They have no pain during the operations and no after-aches or soreness?
A: Very seldom.

Q: Do you pray or do anything mentally before each operation?

A: No, not as you mean it. I may bow my head and meditate for a few seconds. That is all.

Q: You do not have to do anything to induce the power?

A: No, the power is always there.

Q: You are absolutely sure?

A: It is guaranteed.

Q: By whom or what?

A: My Protector.

Q: Is it true, as reported, that you have used your teeth, on occasion, to bite off some sections of a uterus or other organs, as needed?

A: Yes, I have used my teeth, or my tongue, for cutting or severing.

Q: We have seen you do this in cutting through a three-inch width of adhesive tape, using either your fingers, the side of your right hand, or your tongue. Is this the same power?

A: The same.

Q: Is your personal life protected so that no harm will befall you?

A: Yes.

Q: How long can you be assured of this?

A: Till my mission on earth is finished.

Q: Do you know how long that will be?

A: No, that has not been revealed to me.

Q: We have heard a fantastic story from several people who have been very close to you. They swear every word of it is true. It's about the time you were visiting the Bayside Night Club, on Dewey Boulevard in Pasay City, with a lawyer friend.

A: Oh, yes, I remember that.

Q: We were told you were mistaken, that night, for the leader of a rival gang and they were out to kill him.

A: Yes.

Q: They said that you got up, went into the men's room and left your lawyer friend sitting at a table?

A: Yes, I remember.

Q: While you were in the men's room, the gang, thinking this lawyer friend was your bodyguard, attacked him and knocked him out, leaving him lying on the floor.

A: That's right.

Q: And when you came out of the men's room, they were ready to gun you down. They aimed two sawn-off shotguns at you and a high-powered rifle.

A: Yes.

Q: But when they tried to pull the triggers they couldn't do it, the guns wouldn't go off. You fixed your eyes on them in some manner and they couldn't do anything.

A: Yes.

Q: And you ran to your lawyer friend, grabbed hold of his body, dragged him out of the night club and hailed a taxi?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: And these gangsters followed you outside, still aiming their guns at you, trying to shoot, but the guns still wouldn't go off?

A: That's right.

Q: And it wasn't till you got your half-unconscious lawyer friend in the taxi and it started off, that the guns blazed. They peppered the back of the jitney, but neither of you was hurt.

A: That's correct.

Q: After this was all over and you were away safe, we were told by those who were close to this incident that your lawyer friend asked you, "Tony, why did not those firearms bark?"

A: Yes, I remember, he asked me that.

Q: And you were said to have replied, "As long as you are with Tony, you are safe."

A: Yes, I told him something like that.

Q: Now, Tony this may seem like an ordinary occurrence to you if you are accustomed to that kind of protection, but it is absolutely out of this world to us.

A: Yes, I can understand how you would all feel about it—but it happens to be true, as you were told.

Q: Then there is undoubtedly some great spiritual influence surrounding you and working through you?
A: No more through me than others, who have this God-power. It is everywhere present.
Q: Well, if it is, very few human creatures are yet using it or are even aware of it. The state this world is in, it would seem high time people were learning about it.
A: Yes, I would hope so.
Q: We are having so much trouble all over the earth with racial problems, hates, prejudices, Yet you and other healers like you are apparently demonstrating that this God-power can work through any race, regardless of a person's colour or religion, just so long as he develops the spiritual side of his nature?
A: Yes, if he does that the God-power or Holy Spirit will be with him.
Q: Tony, does this God-power, your Protector, give you any feeling about the future?
A: Yes.
Q: Any idea or suggestion of what is going to happen to the people of this earth in the next two or three years?
A: Yes, two or three—perhaps seven.
Q: What does your Protector say or indicate is coming?
A: Big trouble.
Q: Where, here in the Philippines?
A: Here, in your country, Japan, everywhere.
Q: What kind of "big trouble"?
A: Maybe big earthquakes, maybe big war, maybe both.
Q: Where will *you* be when and if this happens?
A: Here, with my people.
Q: What can *we* do, where we may be, if "big trouble" comes?
A: The best you can. Do not worry. Trust in the God-power, like I trust my Protector.

Thus ended as interesting and provocative an interview as I have ever had, giving us much pause for thought, reflection and analysis.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE MANILA NEWSPAPER FILES

TO JUDGE AND EVALUATE properly what is taking place in the Philippines is a monumental task. If you permit yourself to be influenced by a few reports of fakers and quacks, you might be disposed to dismiss all purported faith and spirit healings as not warranting the time and expense of investigation.

When, that night, after our return to the hotel, I spread out before me the photostated copies of many newspaper items which Belk had collected, and saw the numerous headlines denouncing all spiritual healing practices as fraudulent, I realised even more the enormity of the assignment ahead of us. Yet it was our determined objective to ferret out the true from the false, and to give a fair, unbiased picture of what was really happening.

There is obviously not space in this or ten other books to detail the vast pro and con material. I ask you to accept what I am able to present as typical, with the hope that it can give the overall sensing of what confronted us in making our investigation.

For example, take this heading, "Medics Give Quacks Death Blow", and excerpts from the article written by Valentin C. Loyola:

> "I met him in a lakeside barrio of Agusan before the last war. Barely middle-aged, he had that look of fanaticism about him. His denims looked overdue for the laundry and he himself needed some scrubbing. His teeth, permanently clamped on rolled tobacco, could disgrace a toothpaste ad.

"And yet, this man was sought by many people from the surrounding towns and barrios. He had established himself as an indispensable medicine man.

"The way he applied his 'medicine' would nauseate anybody. To a would-be mother, writhing in labour pains, he insisted that a red cock scratch her abdomen. To a man in the grip of malaria fever he gave some mysterious oil to drink, recited unintelligible incantations, executed weird dances and, in spine-tingling tones, shouted far into the night to chase away evil spirits. He deprived the sick man of much-needed rest after the fever had subsided.* "I met another one of his kind in southern Samar, also before the war. He was a betel nut-chewing man whose curative powers were in a bottle of water. It looked like ordinary water, but he claimed that it could cure any describable ailment. And the people flocked to him, while in town a good doctor was offering his services free to the poor. . . .

"If we have to judge by the present trends, the days of quack doctors and unlicensed midwives are numbered. In a comparatively short span of years, people who had looked up at quack doctors as impregnable institutions now seek the benefits of modern medicine . . ."

In further support of this point of view was an article by Rod F. Concepcion, titled, "Science v Quackery—Ignorance, Poverty, Foster Superstitions in Barrios":

"The Philippines is already on the threshold of the atomic and jet age. Modern 'miracle drugs' can be bought from a town drug store for a few centavos. Yet, out in the country areas, charlatans still popularise on superstitious notions and practices among a big part of the population.

"Why do villagers still fall for the hocus-pocus 'art of healing' and risk their lives in the hands of sorceresses, faith healers and so forth?

"Dr. Rodolfo V. Guiang gives four reasons in his recently published book, entitled, *Philippine Medical Superstitions Told in Parables*. According to him the reasons are ignorance, poverty, desperation and remorse of conscience.

* Note, however fantastic the treatment, "the fever had subsided."

"Ignorance, because many rural people have not yet been informed of the scientific facts and explanations that debunk these beliefs and practices. Poverty, because they still cannot afford the high cost of medical care, although they can afford the cheap remedies of the quacks. Desperation, because when a sick man is seriously ill, or is pronounced by a reputable physician as hopeless or incurable, he or his family has that instinctive urge to try any remedy, be it of dubious value. Remorse or conscience, because should the patient not get well, as a result of breaking from old beliefs and practices, someone in the family might keep saying ever afterwards, 'If only we had done this, the patient might have pulled through.' "

Many headings proclaim news items, conflicting in nature, such as:

STRANGE OCCURRENCES DEFY SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATIONS

MEDICS USE NEW WEAPONS IN FIGHT AGAINST QUACKERY

FOLK CANNOT BUY DRUGS, GO TO QUACKS

HEALERS, PROPHETS OR FAKES?

The article by Max Buan, Jr., under this last heading, answered a question often asked, "Why does not the Medical Association of the Philippines take more stringent action against all fakers?"

"Viewing with concern this upsurge of so-called 'faith healers' in the country, one is apt to raise the query whether they (faith healers, as professed crude medical men, licensed or unlicensed) are condoned by society in their practice of a profession that legally belongs to the titled professionals.

"Some time ago, a similar question was raised publicly to this effect when an American missionary came over to spread faith-healing to the masses. The board of medical examiners, the medical watchdog of the country, through its chairman, Dr. Tranquilino Elicano, came out with a public statement, virtually admitting that 'faith healers,' for the most part, are not

within the province of jurisdiction of the medical board. (The medical board's stand follows)

1) "Faith healers who do not make use of any means which fall within the provisions of the medical law cannot be prosecuted.
2) "Violators of the medical law, if they are not physicians, are referred to the city fiscal, because they do not fall within the jurisdiction of the medical board. However, this does not mean that the board will not co-operate fully with the prosecution of some violators of the medical law."

In 1959, according to news dispatches, a new medical act was passed by which the national Medical Association could wage a more effective legal battle against "faith healers and charlatans." Formerly these people could freely practise while their cases were pending in court, and even if convicted, pay only a small fine with a jail sentence of no more than 90 days. But this new act in which the Medical Association had a hand in drafting, carried a fine of "not less than P1,000 (about £90) not more than P10,000 (about £900) with a subsidiary imprisonment, of not less than one year nor more than five years, or by both such fine and imprisonment."

Under these strict provisions, Tolentino was reported to have deliberately staged a public demonstration of spiritual healing in Barrio Kangkong, Quezon City, so that officials of the anti-quackery committee of the Philippine Medical Association could witness the mediums perform their psychic surgery.

The account of this healing session was reported for the *Manila Times* by Alberto Rous, under the heading "Faith Healers Display Work."

"The demonstrations highlighted the annual convention of the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas.

"Using such implements as razor blades, cotton, and denatured alcohol, inspired spiritual healers (mediums) of the religious sect relieved ailing members of their flock of alleged tumours, witchcraft spells and internal pains.

"The series of demonstrations was tape-recorded and filmed

by technicians of the National Bureau of Investigation. Dr. Ernesto Brion, NBI medico-legal officer, was also present and gathered specimens of the tissues removed from the patients.

"A surgical demonstration involved the removal of a growth or tumour from the nape of a 64-year-old patient. The patient in this form of operation, in which no anaesthetic was used, was Doroteo Viola, of San Rafael, Bulacan.

"The medium, or spiritual healer, was Ben Balacano, 29, of Doroteo Road, Balintawak, Quezon City. Intoning prayers and apparently guided by faith and the religious hymns (in Ilocano) of the congregation, Balacano opened up the patient's tumour and began to remove it with his bare fingers.

"Finding this procedure a bit difficult, he called for a razor blade and then made incisions. Then he sewed up the whole thing with an ordinary needle and thread. All this time, the patient was seen suffering from pain, gritting his teeth and clenching his fist to withstand the ordeal. He came out of the ritual apparently all right, although still complaining of pain.

"Another operation, in which alleged bits of tissues and organs were removed by Ben Balacano, was performed on Miss Constancia Tigno, 48, of 944 Antonio Rivera, Tondo. She had been previously diagnosed by a physician to be suffering from a tumour in the uterus.

"Felisa Cortes, 24, a medium from San Quintin, Pangasinan, drew out a long piece of banana fibre from the mouth of Gertrudis Desta, 61, of Tarlac. She was said to be under the spell of evil spirits.

"From the exposed midriff of Concordia Cabradella, 23, of Acala, Pangasinan, deft-fingered Cortes also probed with her fingers and then drew out what she called cancerous tissue from Cabradella's kidney.

"A third medium, Rafael Alhambra of Rosario, La Union, used a hot towel and prayers to relieve Florencio de la Cruz, 27, of Burgos, Tarlac, of his distressing symptoms of dyspepsia. De la Cruz said doctors at a provincial hospital failed to cure him of his stomach pain.

"Professor Tolentino, head of the Spiritists, said the sect now has 20 specialists and about 200 mediums and over a half-a-million followers. These gifted specialists and mediums perform acts of spiritual healing during religious services. . . .

"Cortes said mediums perform faith-healing acts in a state of trance during which they appear to be incommunicado with the outside world. They come out of the trance and the demonstration allegedly without remembering what they have done.

"Dr. Ramon R. Angeles, chairman of the PMA fact-finding committee on quackery, said that his committee witnessed the demonstrations on the instructions of the PMA council."

Follow-up news stories stated that formal charges were filed, as a test case, in the local court at Quezon City against Ben Balacano, member of the Union Espiritista de Filipinas, for violation of the Medical Act of 1959. Balacano, who was not a physician, used his bare hands and a razor blade to remove an alleged tumour from the body of Doroteo Abula, aged sixty-four.

The prosecution announced that it was also filing charges against Cortes, who allegedly used her bare hands and a razor blade in extracting supposed cancerous tissues from the kidney of patient Concordia Cabradella.

Bail of P2,000 (about £180) was recommended for the faith healers. This was put up by Tolentino on behalf of the union. Samples of the alleged cancerous tissues, removed from Cabradella by Cortes, were submitted by the medico-legal experts of the NBI.

I was interested to note that no claims were made by these experts, in the press, that the tissues and organs allegedly removed from the bodies of patients were not genuine. Nor were the healers accused of having performed sleight-of-hand in giving the illusion that they had opened up the bodies when they had not. Crude though the operations may have been, and in these cases razor blades were used, freely displayed, the patients apparently were recovering. No charges were made that infection had resulted, the patients were not complaining.

When the healers were arraigned in court, Tolentino appeared on their behalf and was reported to have criticised the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine Medical Association for harassing of their healers.

"Faith healers cannot be held responsible for their healing acts," stated Tolentino, "because they perform their cures in a state of trance and under the guidance of 'the Holy Spirit.' "

He also alleged, according to the news account, that in more that a thousand healing demonstrations he witnessed, not one patient died or succumbed to post-operative complications.

This flurry with the law over the illegality of "faith healing" was climaxed by a news item, headed:

MEDICAL EXAMINERS CANNOT
GO AFTER FAITH HEALERS

"Dr. Tranquilino Elicano, chairman of the board of medical examiners, confessed the other day that the board is powerless to go after so-called faith healers in this country for the simple reason that its jurisdiction includes only physicians suspected of malpractice. . . .

"Explaining the board's stand on private persons illegally practising medicine or professing to cure illnesses by miraculous powers, Elicano said the proper agency to go after these individuals is the fiscal's office.

"The twice-appointed chairman of the medical board said even if the board were cloaked with powers to prosecute the faith healers, it would find its hands tied by the professed innocence of the miracle-workers who always claim that God —not they—is responsible for the 'cures.'

" 'The board certainly cannot go after God,' Elicano declared,' and neither can it go after the faith healers themselves because, most of the time, they do not administer any medicine or use any gadget in their "works." ' "

Here was evidence that, even with the new Medical Act, mediums performing psychic surgery and other types of healing, associated with the Spiritista group, and others like Tony, could not be effectively prosecuted by the Philippine Medical Association. It would be up to the fiscal authorities to prosecute. Even they would have to have an air-tight case, perhaps backed by the charges of a patient that infection, or death, or some physical impairment had resulted.

In my study of the absorbing news items, going back many years and up to the present, I came across a double-column story with a large photograph of Tony, surrounded by some fifty men, women and children, performing "psychic surgery." The story, written by reporter Francisco de Jesus, is of compelling interest. I reproduce it in its entirety:

SAMPALOC FAITH HEALER
OPERATES ON 2 SICK WOMEN
WITH HIS BARE HANDS
Doctor, Newsman,
Witness "Operations"

"A Sampaloc faith healer, unschooled in medical science, performed yesterday two abdominal operations with his bare hands.

"With a prayer on his lips, Antonio Agpaoa, 24, of 1403 Ibarra, Sampaloc, removed a stone from the kidney of one Carmen Santos of Ballay Pare, Candaba, Pampanga, and a cancerous tumour from the uterus of another woman.

"I witnessed the manual operations and I was not alone. Some 50 people, including Dr. Ramon R. Angeles, president of the Private Medical Practitioners Association, and a Roman Catholic priest, milled around the faith-healer's room to watch him work.

"We gasped as Agpaoa, with his bare and unsterilised hands, opened Mrs. Santos' abdomen. His hands became bloody while probing for the woman's kidney.

"When he located the kidney, Agpaoa removed the stone bothering the woman. Then mumbling a weird incantation"—*I have never heard Tony do this*—"he sealed the opening, making the sign of the cross."

Tony, of course, is a Roman Catholic, but I have never seen him make this sign during or after an operation.

"With a cocky air"—*certainly a reporter's parlance*—"he dared us to find the scar where he had made the incision on the woman's abdomen. True enough, no scar was discernible!

"And Mrs. Santos got up from the cot, which served as the operating table, as if nothing had happened. She was relieved

of her pain, she said, as she sauntered to an adjoining room.

"A few minutes later Agpaoa performed another operation, this time on Mrs. Angelina Cruz, 53, of 40 Kalabite, La Loma, Quezon City, for removal of a cancerous tumour in her uterus.

"Agpaoa used his teeth to cut off the tumour from the uterus. Like the first patient, Mrs. Cruz got up from the cot unhurt and 'cured.'

"A piece of stone removed from Mrs. Santos' kidney was given by the faith healer to Dr. Angeles as a memento of the proceedings. **Dr. Angeles, raising a sceptical eyebrow, said he would have the stone examined and the blood analysed before he could comment on what he saw.**

"When interviewed by the reporter, the young faith healer attributed his supernatural powers to God with whom he claimed he was in constant communion. He said he always prayed before and after an operation for 'divine guidance,' without which, he said, he would not be successful.

"Agpaoa first hit the limelight a few months ago when he successfully performed a 'hernia' operation on a man without any surgical instrument. Since then, sick people from as far as Mindanao have flocked to his 'clinic' in Sampaloc, seeking treatment.

"Agpaoa says he does not charge his patients for his services, but admitted he accepts voluntary contributions to help him maintain his clinic."

Going back several years, I found another news story about Tony, written by reporter Augusto P. Sta. Ana, under the Heading:

FAITH HEALER OPERATING
WITH HANDS AWES COPS

"A 22-year-old miracle healer whose 'miraculous powers' consist of performing 'successful operations' with his bare hands, has certain residents of Sta. Cruz district agog and several ranking Manila police officers believing in him.

"The youth's presence in the city was revealed this morning by Captain Jose Rarang, chief of the MPD arson section, who turned in a report to Detective Major Enrique Morales.

"Rarang identified the healer as Antonio Agpaoa, native of

Rosales, Pangasinan. He was unavailable for interview having left the other day for his home town.

"According to Rarang, the youth performed a successful operation on Det. Conrado Concepcion in which the latter's peptic ulcers were 'removed.' Rarang said the operation was carried out last July 21.

"The other 'patient' cured was Catalina de Leon, 47, of 2126 Anacleto, Sta. Cruz, whose kidney ailment was corrected by the youth July 27.

"Aside from himself, Rarang said, those who witnessed the operation on De Leon were Lt. Pedro Junio, Sgt. Timotho Mercado, Det. Pablo Victorino, Cpt. Nemesio Ilagan, two unidentified professional doctors and five similarly unnamed ladies.

"Describing the operation performed on De Leon by Agpaoa, with the witnesses just three feet away, Rarang said the youth, after baring the stomach of the woman, made a sign with his hands as if to inflict a cut at the stomach centre.

"Rarang said he and the other witnesses were surprised when they saw 'blood' spurt at the place where the youth made the sign, and then the healer inserted two fingers inside the wound and brought out the intestines.

"Both operations were performed in the residence of Det. Concepcion at 2593 Kalimbas, Sta. Cruz.

"Rarang said he will be the next patient of the youth upon the latter's return to the city. Rarang was supposed to have been operated upon yesterday. The arson chief did not state what kind of ailment he has."

With such a growing reputation, charges were probably inevitable. Tony had told us he had been arrested and fined. Now I discovered the news item covering this event:

COPS ARREST YOUTH IN SAMPALOC CLINIC

"Two detectives walked in to the 'clinic' of a young faith healer yesterday at noon and stopped him from performing another miracle on the rheumatic legs of a 65-year-old patient.

"Towed to police headquarters by Dets. Ruben Escarcha

and Marcel Bonafe was Antonio Agpaoa, who said he comes from Pangasinan.

"Agpaoa was massaging the legs of Mrs. Juana Lisedeco of 497 Pavia, Tondo, with a battery-powered massaging device, when the detectives came to write finis to his faith-healing days.

"At police headquarters, where some of his patients and the usual bunch of curious had followed him, Agpaoa gave a four-page statement about his activities. His counsel, Wenceslao Laureta, allowed him to sign the statement following a brief consultation with him in Ilocano.

"Charged with illegal practice of medicine, Agpaoa was released at 7 last night after posting a P1,000 (about £90) bond.

"Taken from his 'clinic' at 1403 Ibarra, Sampaloc, were several notebooks with the names and addresses of his patients, an electric massager, a pair of surgical tweezers, a bottle of alcohol, some cotton balls, adhesive tape, gauze and urine specimens.

"Jose S. Santos, 70, a retired mechanic of the Albang serum and vaccine laboratories, offered to tell the police how Agpaoa had, with his bare hands, 'successfully' operated on his ulcers only last Wednesday.

"Among Agpaoa's papers was the original and a photostatic copy of a memorandum allegedly signed by a Malacanang aide, asking authorities not to molest Agpaoa.

"Agpaoa, the eldest of six children of Moises Agpaoa and Felicidad Contreras of Rosales, Pangasinan, said the 'power to heal' came upon him when he was nine, when he suddenly recovered from a serious case of mumps. He said he had been going around curing people ever since, calling on his 'divine powers,' before and after treating or operating on a patient."

The "original letter" referred to in this news item, pertaining to a Malacanang aide, I have in my files, loaned to me by Tony. It reads:

"Malacanang, Manila
"September 26, 1959

"To Whom It May Concern:

"This is to certify that I witnessed Antonio Agpaoa, alias Tony, a God's faith wonder healer, perform an operation on a woman with a tumour inside her stomach. That I saw it with

my own eyes when he opened with his bare fingers that part of the stomach where the tumour was and extracted therefrom a piece of black flesh (tumour). Blood came out, plenty of it. When this fellow took away his hands from the wound in her stomach, the wound disappeared and no sign of cut or wound can be seen on her stomach.

"Upon investigation, I found out that this wonder healer used to cure sick persons just for the humanitarian spirit of helping people. I also found out that this wonder healer does not charge for his services. To anyone who will witness him perform this miracle, he will be surprised how this thing is made possible. Information was also had that he had been performing this 'wonder healing' of sickness since he was yet nine years old.

"In view hereof, it is requested that he should not be molested and be let alone to help cure sick people, especially those who cannot afford the expenses of going to the hospital.

(Signed) "JORGE B. DELARMENTE

"Colonel, Inf.
"Senior Aide-de-Camp to the President"

Under date of September 30, 1959, the woman that Tony had operated upon, Mrs. Owen Usman, had also written a testimonial, countersigned by her husband, the original of which I am holding in my files. It reads as follows:

"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

"This is to certify that I, Mrs. Owen Usman, wife of Mayor Ballah Usman of Parang, Jolo, Sulu, was operated on for a tumour inside my stomach last September 26, 1959, by Mr. Antonio Agpaoa, alias Tony. Among those who witnessed the phenomenal operation, where Tony used only his bare hands in making incisions and removing the affected tissues, were Colonel Jorge Delarmente, Senior Aide-de-Camp to the President; my husband, the Mayor of Parang Jolo, Sulu, Mr. Ballah Usman; Mr. Pedro B. Baga of 1671 P. Florentino, Sampaloc, Manila, and many others.

"Believing faithfully in the power of God, I submitted myself voluntarily to the healings of Tony, whom I earnestly requested. I am now cured and feeling well and fine and returning to my home town. I am indeed happy and very grateful to-

wards God and to Tony who does not even charge me any amount for his services.

"Aside from my operation, I have also seen or witnessed personally several persons who were treated and cured by the same man, Antonio Agpaoa, alias Tony.

"With the blessing of God, I hope Tony will be allowed to pursue his humanitarian mission unmolested and be free from unnecessary and unfair human harassment.

"(Mrs.) Owen Usman
"Parang, Jolo, Sulu

"Note: The operation on my wife was successful and issuance of the above statements were all under my knowledge and consent, for which, in fact, I am very glad and sincerely thankful to God and Tony and others who have been kind, helping make this event possible.

(Signed) "Ballah Usman
"Mayor of Parang, Jolo, Sulu"

Now that you have read these testimonials, let us return to the newspaper items I was examining that night in my hotel room in Manila. Knowing Tony, as I now did, I sat for quite a while, reflecting on this finale to his arrest:

FAITH HEALER FINED P1,000

"Antonio Agpaoa, the Sampaloc faith healer who claims he can operate with his bare hands, pleaded guilty to a charge of illegal practice of medicine this morning and was fined P1000.

"The fine was imposed by Judge Jesus Y. Perez, of the Manila court of first instance before whom Agpaoa pleaded. He was given no jail term.

"Agpaoa, several weeks ago, surprised Manilans when he was featured in a newspaper picture ,'operating' on a patient without surgical instruments.

"Agpaoa was arrested for violation of a new law against medical quacks.

"Police investigation indicated that Agpaoa used sleight-of-hand tactics."

Sleight-of-hand? It was possible. This was not to be the first

time I would hear Tony accused of such legerdemain. It had been a stock in trade of many fake healers. But if patients, submitting to alleged operations by Tony, had actual physical afflictions and these disappeared following the operation, and they continued in good health, how could "sleight-of-hand" have accomplished this?

I looked down at the mass of photostats of news clippings spread out on the bed. Another heading on a feature story caught my eye. The date-line was London. It was listed, "Special to the *Daily Mirror* by Leslie Hayes." The title read:

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE TURNING BACK TO FAITH CURES DESPITE NEW DRUGS

The story itself was of compelling interest and great significance to me. In the light of what is now happening not only in the Philippines but in various countries throughout the world, it should be of equal interest to you.

"LONDON—From time immemorial, people have, in various ways, sought release from pain through magic, witchcraft, herbs, hypnotism and drugs.

"Now, with diseases still rampant despite modern 'miracle' cures, the wheel has revolved full turn and more and more people are again turning to a form of healing first practised thousands of years ago—spiritual healing.

"Three books just published in London approach the subject from different angles and together form a basis for further study by interested laymen.

"D. Caradog Jones, a well-known social scientist, has made an objective study of the subject in *Spiritual Healing* in which he includes 48 case histories of patients who have been healed by spiritual means.

"All the facts available in these cases are presented with unbiased lucidity and the scope ranges from relief from migraine to instantaneous mending of a broken neck.

"Mr. Jones does not attempt to claim that spiritual healing has proved to be 100 per cent successful. He does, however, include some Indian records kept by a bishop who practised anointing for healing in India from 1912 to 1917.

" 'Of these cases,' he writes, 'failures amounted to 27.7 per cent of the total and there was some measure of success, partial, if not complete, in all the rest. Those who fully recovered numbered nearly one-third of all those reported upon and if we include those who showed a marked improvement, the proportion was 54 per cent. Only 7.1 per cent had a relapse.'

"The bishop did not claim to have any special gift. He rested, Mr. Jones says, simply on Christ's command and his promises to the Church.

"Mr. Jones raises an interesting sidelight on ill-health when he quotes a clergyman as saying that 'some patients do not really want to be healed.'

"This aspect is also mentioned by a Church of Scotland minister, the Rev. Harry Hutchinson, of Glasgow, in his book. *The Church and Spiritual Healing.*

"Mr. Hutchinson says: 'the easy assumption that all sick people desire healing is not warranted. There is no hospital in the country without at least a percentage of patients who could be well in the shortest conceivable time if they really desired healing.'

" 'Illness,' he says, 'is never God-inflicted. Modern research in psychosomatic medicine is uncovering a most unpopular but stark truth about human nature, to the effect that an astonishingly high percentage of our bodily illnesses are directly caused by our too ready display of unworthy emotions. Cherishing a grudge, carrying a resentment, giving vent to anger—all may be the initial stage in a physical illness.'

"Viewing the whole subject of healing from a theological aspect, Mr. Hutchinson presents a forcible case for spiritual healing, based not on fact but on the why and how.

"In a foreword, the Rev. George Johnstone Jeffrey, a former Moderator of the Church of Scotland, speaks of modern divine healing as 'the recovery of something vital in her armoury which the Church has suffered to fall into disuse.'

"A medical doctor who believes fervently in divine healing is Dr. Christopher Woodard. In his book, *A Doctor's Faith Holds Fast* he describes how he himself has, in his consulting room, treated patients by prayer.

"Dr. Woodard does not consider that divine healing is only the prerogative of the Church. 'With divine inspiration,' he

says, 'I believe that all Christians can be used as channels of the perfect healing.'

"The belief in 'possession' by evil spirits is regarded by many as an archaic notion. Not so, Dr. Woodard. He says: 'possession by an evil or negative spirit is a far more common phenomenon than most people realise. In fact, I should say that 90 per cent of people suffer from a sort of possession. It may take the form of bad temper, envy, maliciousness, pride, or even something more serious such as epileptic fits or brainstorms.'

"He describes, in vivid terms, the almost incredible story of Elizabeth, one of twin sisters, born in 1940, who was possessed by an evil spirit and suffered from terrible fits and brainstorms, She was cured after a church service in which anointing, a prayer of exorcism and the laying on of hands by a spiritual healer, all played a part."

As I finished reading this article, I reflected that all these forms of spiritual healing were taking place in the Philippines, as elsewhere, surrounded by an atmosphere of mystery and chicanery. How to separate the real from the unreal? That was the basic problem. Did genuine healers, on occasion, perform trickery? Did they do it when the "healing power," for some reason or another, was not present? Or to especially bedazzle and impress the doubters, or the gullible?

Why should those endowed with genuine healing abilities resort to sleight-of-hand, if they did, at any time, under any provocation? What kind of compulsion caused them to do it, if some of them were guilty of pretence or deception, as they certainly were? Was this a part of the perversity of human nature? Was this counterfeit that closely identified with the genuine? Could evil and mischievous spirits or influences actually exist, able to manifest more easily, on occasion, through the minds of highly sensitive men, women and children?

If D. Woodard were right, in his observation and contention that 90 per cent of all human creatures were susceptible to "possession," at times, could this possibly explain the hitherto inexplicable? What forces, good and evil, were actually playing upon the mind and emotions of man? Had man really become

aware of all that was taking place within and without his field of consciousness?

These questions assailed me that night in the Manila hotel room, so many miles from my peaceful little home in Arkansas.

Why should I be letting these thoughts disturb me? Why shouldn't I be satisfied with a placid existence, following the established pattern of social regimentation and conformity? There was instant acceptance and no challenges in this kind of living, nothing to lie awake at nights. No concern about being considered an "odd ball" or "too far out" by one's neighbours. No danger of ostracism, criticism or condemnation. Just let well enough alone; stay in areas that had already been defined and established as the way the world was. Don't question the empirical opinions of science or medicine. Leave all this to the academicians. They spoke with the voice of final authority. If they said there was nothing to spiritual healing, that psychic surgery was absolutely impossible, that it had to be a fake, why challenge their pronouncements? Why risk what little good reputation might have been achieved? Was it worth it?

"Yes," something deep inside me answered. "Yes, it was! It *is!*"

This conclusion came with the recollection of mankind's treatment of many of our now great men and women who had pioneered in giving the world new ideas, new inventions and new achievements, which later proved of tremendous value to humanity.

I recalled how the world had laughed at Columbus for his belief that the earth was round; how many predicted he would sail off the edge of the earth, that his venture was utterly foolhardy! I remembered how people scoffed at Pasteur for declaring that germ life existed; that if doctors did not sterilise their hands before operations, patients would become infected by these invisible germs and die! Galileo, developer of the telescope, who proclaimed that the earth revolved about the sun and gave us a new concept of space and the heavenly bodies, was viciously attacked, put through an inquisition and com-

pelled to recant by the Church of his day! John Fiske, inventor of the steamboat, was so ridiculed for his efforts that he committed suicide and Robert Fulton later received credit for the development! They made sport of Edison's light in a bottle, saying if God had wanted man to have more light, He'd have given it to him! People hooted when they heard that Bell, inventor of the telephone, was trying to send a human voice over a wire.

Sceptics were certain Marconi could never send a sound through the air! And deForest was ridiculed for working on a tube which he claimed could receive and make radio waves audible! Tesla, and other inventive geniuses who helped produce television, were thought to be wasting their time—it was absolutely impossible to transmit pictures through space! Cyrus found it difficult to get backers for his Atlantic cable! The Erie canal was once termed "Clinton's ditch!" Lord Lister, later to be known as "the father of sanitation," was lambasted and persecuted! So were Morse and his telegraph, Whitney and his cotton gin!

No one took the Wright Brothers seriously when they were attempting to make a machine which would fly like a bird! People joked about Henry Ford and the first horseless carriages, and physicians in that day were certain the human body could not stand a speed of more than twenty-five miles an hour! Einstein was challenged by the scientific world until his revolutionary mathematical equations were finally proved by experiment! Wilkins was pooh-poohed when he contended it would be possible to develop a submarine that could sail under the Arctic and Antarctic ice fields and eventually go around the world under water! Fun was poked at Goddard and his son for their pioneering work in building rockets, which became the forerunners of our complicated missile and space vehicle systems of today!

In our most recent times, Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky was vilified to the point of attempted crucifixion by fellow-scientists for advancing new theories in his book, *Worlds in Collision*, wherein he stated his conviction that past global catastrophes

throughout history had been caused by extra-terrestrial agents. In support of this theory, he expressed confidence it could be proved by research that geo-magnetic planetary fields existed which had interacting effects on all planets.

This thesis was apparently considered a genuine threat to the ego of the scientific establishment. As a consequence, prominent American scientists made every effort to keep Velikovsky's book from being published; editors and museum directors forfeited positions of long standing for endorsing Velikovsky's views. Leading astronomical laboratories refused to test Velikovsky's theories. The issue of free speech and freedom of the Press became challenged when the foremost scientific journals refused to publish Velikovsky's papers even after Mariner II space probes and other startling, independent finds had validated many of his major hypotheses. Not until 1962, sixteen years after the first appearance of his provocative book, was Velikovsky's name linked to any of these discoveries in any scientific publication. In the interim, the majority of the most famous names in science had been enlisted in the condemnation of this great man.

What I could not help but wonder, as I reflected on man's *scientific inhumanity to man*, was what would happen as a result of world interest now developing in "spiritual healing"? Was history to repeat itself all over again? Would those speaking out in defence of an open-minded study and investigation of all faith and spirit healing be similarly savagely attacked?

It was evidence to me that many men of science deplore changes. Many dread getting out of the rut of accepted theory to investigate the unknown. If text books say that two chemicals cannot be mixed, the average scientist makes no attempt to mix them. Finally a man comes along who has not read the text book and finds a way to mix the hitherto unmixed chemicals.

I asked myself, "Are those entrenched in self-satisfied, comfortable positions of power, prestige and plenty, going to be as quick to condemn as had been those who tried to stop the new truths that Velikovsky had sought to present to the world?"

The answer came through recalling Tennyson's immortal lines:

The old order never changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

CHAPTER TWELVE

UNEXPECTED DELAYS

THE NEXT TWO DAYS were spent waiting, in the main, since Tony was postponing and re-scheduling all important operations to be performed for the observation of Dr. Wanderman when he would arrive, as expected, on Saturday afternoon. During this time however, Hiroshi, Henry and I had further long talks with Tony which were most helpful and informative.

I had a more personal conference with Tony and his attorney, Gines through which an agreement was drawn up and signed by all three of us, giving me an exclusive contract to write the life story of Antonio Agpaoa in this book, embodying, as well, an account of faith and spirit healing as it applied particularly to the Philippines.

Tony, realising that an increasing number of people in the States were claiming to be able to speak for him, unauthorisedly asserting that they had the right to represent him, asked me to assume the position of his exclusive personal representative. This agreement was written into the contract, with the specification that I was to receive no compensation for these services.

In representing Tony, I promised to give consideration to whatever proposals were made to him, to advise him to the best of my ability on any propositions or problems that might arise as he became better known and the demands for his services became more and more pressing.

However, I made it clear that more authentic medical research had to be done to establish Tony's powers beyond any doubt, before he could win wide confidence and acceptance. Tony said he well understood this and expressed himself as

perfectly willing to submit to any scientific or medical tests of which I might eventually approve or assist in setting up.

On Friday afternoon, as we were about to leave Tony's for the hotel, he suddenly said, "Sorry to have to tell you, but Dr. Wanderman will not be here tomorrow."

Henry and I looked at him. "Why do you say that?" asked Henry. "He's due at the Manila airport at 1.45 Saturday afternoon."

"He will not be there," said Tony, in a tone of finality. "I know. I see it!"

"Well, if he's not . . ." I started to say, but Tony finished for me.

"He will miss the operations I was holding for him tomorrow afternoon. I will have to try to put them off until Sunday or Monday. Some of them, I am afraid, will not wait."

We did not wish to argue with Tony but we could not see how he could be right. However, when we reached the hotel we found a cable stating: "Dr. Wanderman will arrive Sunday, January 23, Garuda Airlines, 3.15 p.m. instead Saturday on Northwest Airlines. Delay caused by visa trouble."

"Can you imagine that!" exclaimed Henry. "Now, how do you suppose Tony knew?" We spent two maddening hours, telephoning around, trying to get more specific information on what had happened. Filipinos, due partially to language barriers, can be delightfully vague and indefinite at times—non-understanding is an even better word.

Finally we were able to determine that Dr. Wanderman had been unable to board his originally scheduled flight out of New York because his visa and passports were not in order. It seems that he had thought he did not need a passport for the Philippines since he intended to stay less than a week and this was what had held him up. He had been detained in Tokyo, and was having to be re-routed on a flight by way of Hong Kong in order to get to Manila on Sunday.

"Must be some good reason for this delay," said Henry, who had learned to be philosophical, "although I can't figure out what it could be."

Next morning, when we arrived for another day at Tony's, we gave him the news.

"You were absolutely right!" said Henry. "Wanderman's not coming today. He's now due in tomorrow, Sunday afternoon, around same time."

Tony smiled, knowingly. "He will not be here Sunday, either," he said. "More delay."

"Oh, *no*!" Henry and I both cried out. "*Now*—what?"

"Trouble not straightened out yet," said Tony. "You'll see."

"You were right about today," I said, "which means Wanderman will see no operations this afternoon. When *do* you think he will get here?"

Tony hesitated and looked off into space. "He will miss most of the operations on Monday," he said.

"Monday, too!" Henry protested.

"Yes, sir. Plane will be late. I will have to postpone what operations I can till Tuesday. This is very unfortunate. I have to operate on some of my patients. I have to consider them first."

"Yes, of course," said Henry. "We naturally want Doc Wanderman to see all he can in the short time he's here but, it's not your fault he is not arriving on schedule."

At the hotel that night, there was again a cable waiting. It read: "Dr. Wanderman still held up in Tokyo. Now arriving Northwest Airlines, 2.45 p.m. Monday."

"This beats me!" said Henry. "Tony's right again. This is becoming uncanny."

"It's incredible," I said. "All these difficulties over his visa and passports. This is cutting down drastically on Cy's time here. Cy and I have to return, via Tokyo, next Thursday, since I am speaking at Dr. Taniguchi's Seicho-No-Ie Church the following Sunday, and Cy must be back in New York by Monday."

"I know," said Henry. "We'll have to make the best use of our remaining time possible. It's just one of those things."

On Sunday the Herons again loaned us a car and their chauffeur, Sosimo, for a day's trip around the island of Luzon.

Monday now loomed as one of our big and most important

days, with the expected arrival of Dr. Wanderman. We went out to Tony's in the morning and were almost afraid to ask him if he had any further impressions about even another delay, but he smilingly assured us: "No, he is coming this time for sure—only plane is going to be late. Some of my patients have come a long way to be operated on. I put them off last week. I will have to take care of them before the doctor comes."

The camera crew we had hired to take motion pictures of Tony's operations, when Dr. Wanderman would be present, was on hand. We thought it best for them to get familiar with their assignment by having them start shooting.

The first operation Tony performed was for removal of polyps, growths in the nose. It was bloody. The photographer's hands, using a portable camera, shook so that the pictures he took jumped all over the place.

"You had better put your camera on a tripod after this," Henry advised, "or you won't get good shots of any of these operations."

Immediately after lunch, Tony, Gines, Victor Pulido, another associate of Tony's and I, left for the airport to meet my long-time friend Dr. Wanderman. As Tony had predicted, the plane was late and it was nearly four in the afternoon before it arrived.

An extremely tired and worn looking Cy Wanderman finally appeared, almost the last passenger to get off, bringing momentary concern that he had missed the plane at the last minute. He appeared so beaten that I feared he was ill. This proved to have been true, as he privately confessed, but he was so eager to be of what service he could to us that he had made the flight anyway.

Under the circumstances, I was reluctant to suggest that we take him direct to Tony's to see some operations which were supposed to be waiting, instead of checking him in at the hotel first, since time was running out on us.

Cy said, "That's all right, let's go." The long, hot trip to Tony's place in Quezon City began. The weather was warm and humid, not oppressive to me, but particularly so to Cy.

"Awful hot here, isn't it?" he said.

"I don't know," I answered. "I've been so interested in what has been going on, I guess I haven't noticed it."

Tony, Gines and Pulido were most polite, gracious and honoured, I am sure, to have met this "distinguished doctor from the States."

I was looking forward eagerly for Cy to see Tony in action. When we arrived back at his house, after an hour's trip through crazy traffic, which bounced us around, it was past five o'clock. Tony was distressed to find that some of his patients had left, tiring of the long wait and somewhat frightened of the news that a doctor was coming to see him work on them. I had noticed that some do not mind onlookers while others do. Tony is always considerate of their personal feelings.

Only one patient remained, with an obviously painful and serious condition. She was a young woman, eight months pregnant, whose right eye was badly swollen, bulging from the socket, the result of an abscess behind it. Tony permitted Dr. Wanderman to examine her. I could see that Cy was immediately concerned. Tony, who had seen her several days before and had asked her to return, now went over her. He tested the eye with his sensitive fingers around the socket. Then he shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Doctor," he said. "Her condition—it is not right for an operation at this time. I would like to show you, but I cannot. I will have to wait." He helped the patient off the table.

"It looks like—it is so late," Tony added. "My patients have left. We will have to wait till tomorrow, Tuesday. There is nothing else I can do."

Cy was just as glad, at that point, I feel certain, since he was dead tired. Henry, who had remained at Tony's for lack of room on the way to the airport, and who had known Dr. Wanderman in the States, now accompanied us together with Dr. Motoyama, as we drove back to the hotel, in a taxi.

"What do you think?" he asked Cy. "What is your first impression?"

"His lack of sanitation," said Cy. "It's criminal. Patients could easily get infected."

"I know," laughed Henry. "That's the first thing that hits you. But despite this, there's been no infection, so we are told, in seventeen years."

"There *has* to be some infection," said Dr. Wanderman.

"Cy," I said, "I think you'll find that in order really to evaluate what Tony does, you are going to have to put aside all your medical training and view this as a separate type of phenomenon. If you don't you will be constantly criticising every move Tony makes as crude, primitive and totally unscientific."

This suggestion got an immediate reaction. "No, I can't do that. I can't put aside a medical background of over fifty years in viewing any operations of whatever kind on the human body. If it is not right, in my judgment, based upon proved and established standards, it is not right, no matter who does it or how it's done."

"Well, we'll turn in early tonight," I said, "and give you a chance to get a good rest. You'll be able to get a much better idea of Tony and his procedures tomorrow."

The most hospitable Herons had Sosimo and the car waiting to take us to Tony's in the morning. A refreshed Cy, still complaining of the humidity, was ready to study Tony's work on a hoped for variety of operations. But when we arrived, Tony's expected patients had not put in an appearance.

"My schedule," explained Tony. "I put off operations for you, Doctor, from day to day, when you did not get here on time. I have no phone. Many sick people cannot always arrange to travel when they want. They have no money or accommodation. It is not easy if they come from long distances, and many of them do. I do not solicit business. I just take what comes to me. Perhaps a little later today, the people will show up. We will just have to wait."

I could see that Dr. Wanderman was disturbed, as well as impatient. He had come thousands of miles on a frustrating trip, with his delays along the way and the aggravation of his visa and passport. Now not to have things organised with

a line-up of patients ready to be operated upon was a further annoyance.

"I think this is deliberate evasion," Cy said to me. "I don't think Tony intends me to see any important operations."

"That's not true," I defended. "Henry and I have personally seen the patients Tony has examined and told to come back for operations when you would be present. But he cannot help it if they do not return when expected. I know you are accustomed to operations set up by appointment and taking place on a set schedule, but Tony takes patients as they come. There are times in between, as now, when there is no one here.

By mid-morning, with nothing more important than a tooth extraction, which Tony removed from a woman's mouth with his fingers, Dr. Wanderman had witnessed no significant operation. The fact that Tony lifted the tooth out effortlessly as well as painlessly did not impress him. *The tooth was probably loose in the first place.*

About this time, Al and Betty Heron dropped in to see how things were going. They mentioned to Dr. Wanderman in a conversation they had with him, that one of their sons had a disturbing physical condition. Dr. Wanderman volunteered to go with them to their home and to examine the boy.

"There's nothing doing around here," Cy said to me. "You said the Herons have been so nice to you. Maybe I can be of help to them."

"That's fine," I said, "but things are apt to happen here at any time. How long do you think you'll be gone?"

"I don't know—perhaps a couple of hours."

It was close to noon. The Herons left with Dr. Wanderman and were not back until nearly three o'clock. In that time, three patients showed up. Tony, after waiting almost two hours, operated on them. Two of the operations were abdominal; the third was a removal of a bad abscess from a woman's eye. All three were operations Henry and I had been eager for Dr. Wanderman to witness.

When Dr. Wanderman returned, he asked, "Any patients showed up yet?"

"Yes," I said. "And Tony has operated on them." I then described the operations.

"There's no excuse for this," said Cy. "He could have waited until I got back. It's just as I told you, he did not want me to see them."

It was useless to try to explain that these patients had people waiting to take them home, that Tony had not held off on the performing of any operations when Swope and Decker had been there, that we had never seen him put off an operation to avoid anyone witnessing it, however important that person might be.

Several more patients, who had previously been operated upon, dropped in for check-ups and to tell Tony they were feeling fine. Then an emaciated man was carried in, a terminal cancer case, in obviously bad condition. Tony examined him, and turning to Dr. Wanderman, said, "You like to examine him, Doctor?"

While Dr. Wanderman was looking him over, Tony stepped aside and said to me: "He's too sick. I cannot operate."

With the patient lying on the table and members of his family standing anxiously by, Dr. Wanderman said to Tony: "This man is in no shape to stand an operation. He could die any minute."

"I agree, Doctor," said Tony. "That is my diagnosis."

Sorrowfully, after Tony explained in Tagalog that the patient, at present, was inoperable, relatives and friends lifted the extremely ill man from the table and carried him back to the car.

There had been other occasions like this when Tony would not operate, when apparently the "orange" would flare up in his hands, a colour that only Tony saw, the warning that death would result if he proceeded at that time.

It was now late in the afternoon and no sign of any other patients appearing. Tony, with apologies, said, "It looks like this is all for today."

This left only Wednesday and the forenoon of Thursday in which Dr. Wanderman could make a study of Tony's psychic

surgery work. Dr. Wanderman, Dr. Motoyama and I had plane reservations for a flight back to Tokyo on Thursday afternoon.

"Let's hope we have better luck tomorrow," Henry said to Cy, on our way back to the hotel. "You haven't seen anything yet."

"Not very much," Cy admitted, with understandable scepticism at that point.

When we reached Tony's on Wednesday morning, the three cameramen, Ramon Arellano, Jose Purificacion and Steve Serna, were on hand, as they had been since Monday, to photograph such operations as we wished to record on film.

There was a woman waiting with a purported malignant growth in her intestines. At last we were to get some action that Dr. Wanderman might be able to evaluate.

I said to the cameramen: "From the moment the operation starts, I want a continuous camera shot, but please pan, occasionally, to Dr. Wanderman and me, standing beside Tony, observing the operation. I would also like to have you show the patient and her attitude during the operation, so we can capture the entire atmosphere of what is taking place."

My instructions were well-intentioned and they accomplished their purpose. But I was later to be criticised from a scientific standpoint for not having kept the camera focused, at all times, on the operation itself. It looked so incredible to see Tony apparently open up a body and close it that the sceptic naturally wanted to make sure some trickery was not employed in the split seconds that the camera left the scene of the operation and centred upon Dr. Wanderman, the patient or myself.

The patient was a woman perhaps in her early thirties. We had bright floodlights beaming down upon her and she asked for a towel to shield her eyes. When her abdomen was bared, she also requested that her modesty be protected as much as possible. This business of being photographed was something she, of course, had not contemplated.

I placed Dr. Wanderman on the left side of Tony, facing the table, so he could look directly down upon Tony's hands and

the operating area. Standing across from us were Henry, Dr. Motoyama and a group of the patient's relatives and friends. Her husband was holding her hands. In addition, Louie and Victor, Tony's two assistants, stood ready to be of service in supplying whatever might be needed in the way of cotton, forceps, a basin of water or rubbing alcohol. Louie, on Tony's right, held a bottle in which Tony was to drop the growth, once it had been removed.

It was now time for the operation to begin. The floodlights were turned on full and the camera began grinding. The colour motion pictures of this operation, which have aroused great controversy and have been studied again and again, depicted these scenes.

Tony placed the fingers of both hands on the patient's abdomen, just below the navel and began pressing down. He seemed to bore into the body. The arms of Tony and Victor reached across in front of Tony's hands, to pull the covers back from the operating area. You suddenly saw the flesh pulled aside and Tony's hands apparently inside the woman's body.

He held the body open for a moment, for the benefit of the camera, revealing a red-membraned area. Then he began to probe deeper and blood appeared.

His fingers were constantly moving, digging deeper. He brought his right hand out, holding the large incision open with his retracting left hand, as he dropped some tissue into a bottle that Louie extended to him. This movement was repeated two or three times more.

During this part of the operation, Tony twice called for rubbing alcohol to be poured into the open wound. The woman patient never flinched. She was asked if she felt any pain. She said, "No," but she continued to be concerned about the exposure of her body to the camera's all-seeing eyes.

Tony now announced that he was finished with the operation and was ready to "close." But before he did so, I wanted Dr. Wanderman to place his hand inside the incision, as I had done with several patients before, to be assured that Tony was actually in the intestinal area. The picture plainly showed me

giving Dr. Wanderman a little shove, as I urged him to do this, knowing Tony would have no objection. Dr. Wanderman instinctively pulled back, perhaps because of his concern that the patient might be infected. For whatever reason, he would not investigate in this manner.

Tony now took swabs of cotton and began to mop up the blood along the line of the incision. The body apparently began to close as he withdrew his fingers from the opening, until, suddenly, we saw the abdomen exactly as it had looked before the operation, without a scar!

Just at this point, the blanket was thrown over the abdomen by either Louie or Victor, who, knowing the operation was over, were immediately ready to help the woman up and get her off the table. However, I called out: "No, no! We're not through photographing yet!" The same hand, still holding the blanket, now quickly pulled it back in a reverse motion, so that the abdomen was once more in clear view.

Tony took his fingers and stretched the flesh in the area where the opening had been, to show that it was firmly together again and no sign of the operation remained. He then took the bottle containing the "alleged growth," (using the terminology of a careful reporter) and handed it to Dr. Wanderman for examination.

Wanderman held up the bottle and looked at the specimen, as the camera plainly showed. Tony then asked if he would like to see a sample of the blood.

"No, that's not necessary," said Cy.

This conversation, of course, though seen, was not recorded. The photographing of the operation stopped at this juncture. I could tell, however, that Dr. Wanderman was disturbed and had not been impressed.

I interviewed the woman patient who, by this time, had slipped off the table and was leaving the operating room with relatives and friends.

"Did you feel anything?" I asked.

"No," she smiled.

"How do you feel now?"

"I feel fine," she said.

A man was now waiting to have two teeth extracted which had been causing him pain. Tony brought him in and sat him down. The camera was trained on him. The man opened his mouth and the camera looked inside, revealing what appeared to be firmly embedded teeth. The offending molars were towards the back on the right side of his jaw. Tony located them and took a grip on the first one, after having Dr. Wanderman examine the man's mouth.

We saw Tony grip the tooth with his thumb and forefinger. Out it came, as easily as though it had been pulled out of a lump of butter. Tony held the tooth up for inspection. There was blood in the man's mouth.

Again calling on Dr. Wanderman to view the man's teeth at close range, which Cy did, taking off his glasses and peering in, Tony performed the second extraction with equal ease. Now there was more blood and a wad of cotton placed in the man's mouth took care of that. The man wore a patch on his right eye, which had been operated on for cataract a few days before.

When I had an opportunity to question Cy about what he thought of Tony's dental work, he said: "It means nothing. Anyone can do that."

It was not until that night at the hotel that Henry and I had a chance to sit down with Cy and discuss the abdominal operation he had witnessed.

"What I have seen, thus far, does not impress me," said Dr. Wanderman frankly. "I have exposed hundreds of fraudulent cancer cures and healers in my time. I'm sorry to have to say, I consider Tony a fake, I don't think he was ever in the body."

"You don't? Then how do you explain what we all apparently saw?" I asked.

"Sleight-of-hand," said Cy. "He concealed a lamb's membrane, or something of the sort, under the blanket and spread it over the abdomen."

"How about the blood?"

"It wasn't real blood."

"What about the growth in the bottle?"

"That was two or three days' old tissue, taken from some animal."

"How could you tell without a real pathological test?"

"I haven't been trained for years to observe tissue and handle it as I have, not to be able to tell. That growth was never taken from that woman's body."

"If Tony wasn't *in* the body, why didn't you put your hand in as I wanted you to do?"

"I didn't need to, to know what was going on. I am a trained observer. I was seeing what you did not see."

"How could hundreds and thousands of men and women and other observers have been fooled all these years?" I asked.

"I'm sorry," said Cy. "I haven't seen anything yet to indicate anything but clever trickery."

The next day, Thursday, January 27, Cy, Hiroshi, Henry and I went to Tony's for the last time, before the first three of us were to leave for Tokyo that afternoon. Henry had decided to stay on a few days, then to fly to Tapei and Hong Kong with Tony, where he had business to attend to, Tony had then agreed to go on to Tokyo, with Henry, and to submit to a week's instrumentation tests, in the Institute of Religious Psychology, where Dr. Motoyama had his laboratory.

It was my ardent hope that some unusual cases would be present, because Dr. Wanderman had had such a limited opportunity to view a wide variety of them. Unfortunately, there were only two men who had painful surface cysts they wished to have removed.

The first, a man named Isodoro Castillo, 963 O'Donnell Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila, about thirty years of age, had "a badly infected bursa (cyst) in his left shoulder, over the scapula descending deep into the fascia," the tissues covering and supporting the muscles. This was Dr. Wanderman's own description of the condition. There was a highly inflamed raised area about the size of a tennis ball.

Tony had Castillo stretch out on his stomach on the table and, with the camera following every movement, cupped the fingers of both hands around the spot on the left shoulder. He

appeared to massage the bulging area. Then he pressed the forefinger and thumb, of his right hand, held together, against the flesh. His actions were screened, partially by the left hand and partially by a towel, when there was sudden evidence of dark red blood. Tony pulled his hands away to reveal a jagged opening across the top of the ball-like infection.

This done, Tony now pressed his fingers against the sides of the raised surface. An unsightly, yellowish "cheesy" material, flecked with blood, shot from it, like lava from a crater. It was pus and debris from the infected bursa region. Successive pressures and squeezes brought more of it out, to be wiped away by a towel and swabs of cotton.

During this operation, which Dr. Wanderman described later as crude and primitive, Castillo did some grunting as though in pain. To clean out the fibrous nature of the cystic infection, Tony now held a forceps and took hold of shreds of infected flesh and separated them from the healthy tissue, deep in the wound. I winced at this and I would have thought the patient would, too.

The colour motion pictures were no more pleasant to witness than the actual operation itself. At its conclusion, instead of closing the wound, Tony left it open, for drainage, as would any surgeon using instruments. He placed a bandage over the spot and Castillo got off the table. I had been wondering, throughout the operation, how any man, without an anaesthetic, could stand the excruciating pain which ordinarily must have occurred.

"Did it hurt you much?" I asked.

"Well, I felt it," he said, "but not too much, I guess."

This was the first time in the various operations Henry and I had witnessed that we had seen any evidence of distress on a patient's part.

Another man was waiting for a similar operation, a surface cyst in the wall of his stomach. Tony went out to wash his hands and returned, ready to take him on. Again, we brought the camera into play, keeping it focused on Tony's hands.

Once more it was difficult, the way Tony placed his hands

over the cyst, to see exactly what was done. He drew his fingers back and forth with a pressing down motion.

Someone whispered, "Razor blade!" Tony instantly lifted his right hand high in the air and held it momentarily, with fingers extended, a scene captured by the camera, as if he had heard or felt the charge and had reacted to it. Then he took the side of his right hand and drew it across the abdomen. We saw a slit appear and the hard kernel of a cyst popped out, followed by pus and a little blood. Tony cleaned the opening out, used the forceps a few times to pull away infected flesh, and swabbed with cotton. He likewise did not close this wound, but simply put a piece of adhesive tape over it. The patient got off the table.

"Any pain?" I asked him. He shook his head. "No, just uncomfortable."

I would have thought so, under any ordinary physical conditions. The fact that Tony did not close either of these surface openings caused some wonderment, but this could be explained on the basis of drainage being necessary.

It was now noon. We had been invited by the Herons to have lunch at their home en route to the airport. We were driven by Sosimo to the hotel, where we picked up our luggage and proceeded to the Heron residence.

Relaxed in the car, Hiroshi, Henry and I now asked Cy what his final conclusions were. "Tony definitely used a razor blade these last two operations," he said.

"Did you see a razor blade at any time?"

"No, but I am positive he had one. You notice he kept his manipulations screened at all times."

"It's true that some healers have used razor blades in some operations," said Henry. "We know that. Some of Tolentino's healers have openly used razor blades, with no attempt at concealment."

"That's a lot different from opening and closing bodies as has been claimed for Tony," said Cy.

"Admittedly," said Henry. "There's a lot about this that I still don't understand and which has to be investigated. But I

don't go along with your saying that Tony does not open and close bodies. I have seen him perform too many operations and so have hundreds of other people. Are you saying that they were all fooled?"

"They just don't know how to look," said Cy. "They are not trained observers."

Henry asked: "Would you say that Tony did not really operate on these patients? Did Tony actually remove pus and debris from that cyst?"

"Oh, yes, but if a student of mine had performed an operation in that clumsy, brutal manner, I would have disbarred him from medicine," said Cy. "In addition, with the lack of sanitation, both of those men will be lucky if they don't develop a severe infection. As for no pain—they both felt it."

Henry and I did not argue. We looked at Hiroshi who had been sitting, listening quietly.

"Dr. Motoyama, what do you think?"

After a thoughtful moment, he said: "I would not call Tony a fake. I think he is very unusual. More investigation needed. About not closing the openings today? Must be a reason."

"Did you see any razor blade?" I asked.

Dr. Motoyama laughed. "No razor blade. Maybe yes, maybe no. I do not see."

We had a delightful lunch with the Herons, who took us to the airport, where we were met by a farewell party consisting of Tony, Gines, Pulido, and Tolentino, who, with Leonora Pangan, registered nurse, turned Spiritist medium, had also come to see us off.

Since the plane was late departing, we found a private dining room in the airport restaurant, where we had sandwiches, cokes and coffee. There Mrs. Pangan told Dr. Wanderman about many operations she had witnessed. She said that she had assisted many of the Philippines top surgeons in their operations, that she had not believed psychic surgery possible until she had seen it for herself. She told the doctor that she was now giving healing treatments herself, with prayer and laying on of hands, and that she was assisting spirit mediums like Terte and

Blanche. She described how Blanche could open bodies without even touching them, just by swishing his finger over the ailing area.

"*That* I would like to see," said Cy.

It was evident, however, that he did not believe it, although the fact that Mrs. Pangan was a nurse and could talk in medical terms must have been a bit disquieting. Could a woman of her scientific background and training have been entirely deluded?

And yet, Henry and I could not reasonably blame Dr. Wanderman for his scepticism. A strange, almost unbelievable set of circumstances had prevented him from getting any well-rounded picture of Tony's work. Why this had had to happen, we could not determine.

"If we were disposed to believe in witches and hexes," said Henry to me, "we would certainly do a lot of wondering."

On the flight to Tokyo, during our interesting three days there, and on the long plane trip from Tokyo to New York City, I spent little time discussing Tony with Cy.

Henry and I had not brought Dr. Wanderman all the way from the States to the Philippines to get a "yes man" report. We might disagree with his conclusions, which we now did, but we would not argue against his right to have them.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AN INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT

A FEW DAYS after Henry and I began our study of Tony Agpaoa's psychic surgery operations, we met an unusual man, Ulpiano B. Guiang. During the war he had been a guerrilla officer, in pre-war days a federal employee of the United States government at Cavite Navy yard, Industrial Department. Since the war he had been legal adviser as well as founder of different veterans' organisations. He had served as legal adviser to the late President Ramon Magsaysay, and was presently associate advisor on military laws to President Ferdinand Marcos. Officially, according to Guiang, he was also treasurer of the Philippines Democratic Party and president of the party in his district of Tondo, Manila.

Henry and I were impressed, not only by Guiang's comprehensive background, but by his forthright, investigative manner as he expressed to us a deep interest in Tony and his work. He volunteered to help us, with his native language advantage as well as his many valuable contacts in the Islands, to get authoritative information from patients about Tony and the psychic surgery he performed on them.

"How did you first hear of Tony?" we asked.

"Through one of his associates, Victor Pulido, who came to my home for legal assistance. After some exchanges of information, I visited him at Tony's home and saw a number of visitors there, some Americans, a Japanese professional lecturer, and other foreign researchers.

"I was invited to witness a 'miraculous operation' to be performed by Tony. It amazed me to see that Tony used no medical equipment, no blood transfusion, no anaesthetic, ex-

cept with cotton and washing compounds. The operation was by bare hands, with which he opened the stomach of the woman patient and I saw blood and internal organs. Later Tony announced that the defective area was the uterus. Cutting the end of the uterus, about one and a half inches, by his bare hands, without using any equipment, he then asked the woman if such operation was painful. She said it was not. Immediately, as the defective organ was removed and placed on cotton rolls, he closed the wound, leaving no scar, asked the woman to dress and instructed her to check with him in three days."

"Did you see any further operations?" we asked.

"Yes, three to five times since then, I saw several operations on various afflictions, goitre, ovary, heart, liver and cancerous intestines, in the presence of foreign researchers, local medical practitioners and other prominent people. I could not believe what I had actually seen, so I decided to extend my investigations, as I continued my actual viewing of more cases. I questioned patients, visitors and other interested parties, but all confirmed Tony's 'miraculous and divine performances.' What puzzled me and all the people around the operating table was the scarless operations, painless, without the use of drugs, shortest time from five to ten minutes. I exerted my efforts, visiting the numerous patients in their homes just to find out if they had any after pains or complaints. But they all said to me: 'Oh, it is miraculous! Tony has a divine healing power.' "

"What is your present opinion?" we asked him.

"My analytical conclusion," he replied, "after on-the-spot observations and rigid investigation of all persons operated on by him, for various diseases, his internal and external treatments, I am totally convinced that Tony possesses the power of *divine* healing. What he is doing, through spiritual guidance, presents a challenge to the medical field, medical practitioners and medical science. People all around him, in all walks of life, among those who saw his operations and whom I have interviewed, including scientists, thus far have no solution as to the questions: 'Who is Tony? How and through what power does he do these things?'

"Something else I learned; neither Tony nor any of his friends canvass people to go to him for operations or treatment. He collects no medical fees, only accepting such donations, if any, that are offered. Tony, himself, comes of poor Filipino parents, farmers by profession. He was born near Rosales, in Pangasinan, is uneducated, merely fourth grade in school. His ambition in life is to contribute his services to humanity. He speaks English and Ilocano his household dialect. He is married and loves his beautiful wife and children. He is, to me, a man of God."

This opinion, expressed by Ulpiano Guiang, a Filipino of obvious intelligence and background, impressed Henry and me. I asked him if he thought he could prepare for us a brief history of the healing and medical history in the Philippines. He said he would be happy to assist in any way possible, so that the truth could be ascertained and presented.

The following, in essence, is the report that Guiang subsequently made, and I acknowledge my deep appreciation and indebtedness to him as I present it:

> There are still meagre opportunities for the great mass of the Filipino people to avail themselves of professional medical treatment and operations. Before World War II there existed few government health and peuriculture (care of pregnant women centres, especially in the far-away provinces. These health centres were manned by professional physicians, sanitary inspectors, nurses, and assisted by Teniente del Barrios (Barrio lieutenants) to look after and take charge of the health of the people in the community.
>
> In some regions of the country the health personnel could not cope with the job of attending to the medical needs of the population. The few drug stores and medical practitioners, and the people's ignorance and poverty, caused the spread of various diseases which could not be prevented by the government. As a result, even curable diseases became worse and brought about the death of many inhabitants.
>
> This lack of medical facilities, coupled with the impoverished conditions, in some local areas, in the barrios, sitios and remote mountain places, isolated due to poor transportation, few or no

roads and motor vehicles, enabled the business of quack doctors to flourish.

We call these quack doctors "medical pretenders." They prey on the lives of these poor, semi-civilised barrio people, "curing" the sick of different complaints. No medical histories are recorded, nor inquiries as to the origin or source of the disease.

Immediately the quack doctor is called in he requires some preparations—a few silver coins, donation of a medium-sized pig or goat, some boiled eggs and a fresh egg. With these in hand, a "medical ceremony" is performed outside the patient's household premises, near rivers, or a forested area, on afternoon time or during dark hours of the night.

During these "ceremonies," the quack doctor shouts in a loud voice, mumbling some words, demanding the healing of his patient. When these words do not bring about any signs of recovery, they are repeated in a still louder voice. Each time that no healing is evident, the quack doctor demands more of the "healing materials" in the form of another pig or goat, and more eggs, boiled and fresh, all of which he carries home with him.

Due more to the strong determination and will to live of the patients, about fifty per cent of them recover, giving superstitious credit to their quack doctor for overcoming the sickness of a fever, insanity (speaking without sense), rheumatic leg (kulam namamatanda, arising out of working late in the afternoon); soreness of the eyes, stomach trouble, and an assortment of other afflictions, usually given some special name by the quack doctors.

Different "medical pretenders" have different treatments, but they all collect herbs, roots of vegetables, bark of trees, salt, vinegar, ginger pulverised to pieces, wrapped in banana leaves, then applied to the affected area, sometimes cooked with water and wine for massaging the diseased parts, or even to drink, according to instructions given.

In some cases recovery results. But in most cases we see no evidence or picture of medical recovery. So the patients then run to another quack doctor to perform his special procedures and take his pay in more coins and produce and livestock.

The arbolarios or quack doctors are usually older persons

or women, without adequate education, who diagnose diseases, giving fanatical interpretations. For example, the patient is told he has abused ancestral doctrines or reputations of deceased relatives, who formerly resided in the region, and he is now being punished by evil spirits. Under such circumstances, the quack doctors are invited to perform weird ceremonies to exorcise these evil influences, to drive them out.

Then there is the mangkukulam or witch, usually a woman who, according to reliable information, is feeding under her secret care some few small insects of different types; some cockroaches, lizards, flies and small, white rats. They are trained to deliver sickness to any person, in any form, by mere contact or touches, for revengeful purposes. An evil woman who possesses these harmful creatures ordinarily exists through hereditary influences, and can be recognised if she does not look you directly in the eyes but converses with you in a sidewise manner, without permitting you a frontal view.

This powerful witch can install within your neck, stomach or leg, food material, fish, palay, corn and other foreign objects which, from time to time, can hinder your free motion. The presence of such materials within your body can bring about sickness.

A special kind of quack doctor is then required to remove the effect or power of the mangkukulam, by demanding the immediate presence of the mangkukulum, and compelling this witch to remove whatever has been placed in the patient's body. The object, itself, is rarely seen, so professional physicians would not believe in mangkukulam, and their services would be impractical and ineffective in such cases.

There is still another kind of medical pretender known as a "manghihilot" (midwife) a non-professional person, male or female, who attends to birth delivery. Some of my own children were attended by a manghihilot but, under the supervision of a licensed midwife. This manghihilot, although less educated, had sufficient experience in birth deliveries so she could be trusted as an assistant.

Today we have good puericulture centres, maternity hospitals, medical practitioners and specialists in this line, but we still make use of the services of manghihilots, since we have been used to them for years and they save heavy expenses.

The service of the manghihilot today is largely to see and care for the baby, early in the morning and late in the afternoon, giving the baby its bath and helping the mother in every way possible.

PHILIPPINE MEDICAL PRACTICE

The practice of medicine in the Philippines has now become widespread. Increase of population has brought increase of medical practitioners. We have medical organisations, medical societies, government and private hospitals, all with modern facilities, while modern and wonder drugs are locally manufactured by medical laboratories, with some "wonder drugs" imported from other countries.

The Philippine Government, through its legislature, has enacted laws for the promotion and protection of the medical profession. It has put up hospitals in all rural areas. Charity wards can be found in all government and private hospitals for indigent persons, supported by the Social Welfare Administration, as well as civic and religious institutions serving the entire nation.

Professional physicians, technologists and laboratory technicians have been sent to the United States for further medical and technical studies. Yet, with the rapid increase in the number of physicians, and with the assistance of high-calibre foreign medical experts, in line with the continuous perfection of scientific inventions and treatments designed to improve the health of mankind, we cannot help but notice the increase of new diseases we have never known before. This raises the question —WHY? Is it due to atomic radiation—modern warfare? Are the antibiotics killing off some germs and viruses and liberating others?

We, in the Philippines, observe the constant perfecting of mechanical inventions abroad, but we also observe that the world has not yet perfected medical science to the point where it can cure or prevent many diseases.

This is perhaps why many of our people are still seeking cures from our faith and spirit healers and will keep on doing so for some time to come.

For example, there is a man, who has been reported to me, Rufino Magliba of San Fabian, Pangasinan, who has made

himself the "king" of a religious organisation, with established churches in most parts of the country. This spiritual organisation has been in existence some years now, with priests being trained in the home office at San Fabian.

The head of this religious group, I have been reliably told, does some fantastic healings on dental cases and appendicitis operations. He was once arrested, charged with the illegal practice of medicine and dentistry. He pleaded his case, petitioning the local officials to grant an open public demonstration of his powers, so that all medical practitioners and provincial dental authorities could witness his operations. The request was allowed.

It was said that the physicians and dentists and law officials were amazed at his skill in performing dental surgery as well as removal of appendices. He was released with permission to continue his practices. Today he roams around the country, enjoying a good name, causing Catholics, Protestants and other religious organisations to turn in his favour. I have not been able to visit San Fabian, as yet, to get a picture of the Central Church, and to get some case histories and the origin and biography of this man. However, Tony knows of this organisation because San Fabian is only a few kilometers from Rosales, in Pangasinan, where he used to live.

Since leaving the Philippines, I have received communications from Ulpiano Guiang, who continues to observe and investigate Tony's work.

In a letter dated March 12, 1966, he reported:

"Since Tony's arrival from Tokyo, where he went, as you know, to be tested by Dr. Motoyama there were numerous operations of impressive importance, so that I had to stay full time to get records and histories of each individual, with respective addresses. I have seen operations on breast cancer, ulcer, thrombosis, rectum and goitre.

"Also in my records is a case of paralysis of seven years existence. The father of a teacher in Nueva Ecija could not walk, or talk—merely utter 'Tatta—tatta.' Tony made daily massages for the first week, and every three days thereafter. At the end of the fourth week, this man can now walk, slightly, and utter a few words!

"It is difficult and expensive for me to follow up these patients, to get results and final findings, because they live so far apart and some are from the northern provinces of Luzon. But this patient I had in my home.

"As of now, I would evaluate Tony's healings as definitely divine in nature. His towering, bare hand surgical performances are, in my opinion, above the knowledge and skill of professional medical practitioners. Tony moves freely, modestly, without any extraordinary physical culture; no special skill in any field of athletic or mechanical know-how. He knows little of medical terms, and has had no training, except the experience that has come to him through functioning of this divine power.

"Jealousy of Tony and his work is inevitable. He lives under the threat of being arrested for violation of medical practice at any time, despite the great following that he now has. Yet, I am continuing my investigations as best I can to find out more and more of the truth about Tony's healings.

"I saw a heart operation on Mrs. Angela Villarino of Tondo, Manila, but I did not fully describe it because there were dual operations on the liver and heart. I did not explain in detail how he got through the rib cage. On the next operation on a heart, a sister of Mrs. Villarino's of 2604 Juan Luna, Tondo, Manila, I will make a full history and give you detailed information on the operations. The heart operation to be performed will be accompanied by two relative physicians as arranged by Mrs. Villarino, as soon as Tony comes home from Bukidnon, Mandanao, perhaps before the end of this month."

(Author's note: In a postscript to a letter written to Henry Belk on July 9, Guiang wrote: "Please tell Mr. Sherman I will soon be giving him complete histories with names and addresses with their signatures, of patients who underwent heart operations and some other internal operations. I am preparing them now. I am just slow due to financial difficulties as I need to devote my entire time, incur transportation and notarial ratification of the documents, expenses, etc." This material was still not in hand at the time of going to press. H.S.)

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE FAITH OF THE SPIRITISTS

MARK TWAIN SPOKE a great truth when he said, "The only trouble with human nature—is *human nature!*" In a country like the Philippines, where abject poverty is self-evident, crime is also flagrant. As elsewhere, the oldest profession in the world is rampant. You see whites and half-castes, and blendings of yellow and brown and black, every manner of shading intermingled. Go down a dark side street at night, and you will be accosted.

You are led to wonder the extent of the price men, women and children, under seemingly hopeless odds, would be willing to pay for a little food and drink, and momentary feelings of comfort, security and satisfaction.

It raised questions in my mind as to whether or not the hunger for things spiritual did not come to many after they had given up all hope of achieving material pleasures and treasures on earth. Perhaps the promise of some future reward in a life beyond this one would feed the soul, if not the body.

This was, in part, the belief of the Spiritists. I reasoned that it must be reassuring to their several millions of believing members to feel that the great men and women of all past ages, led by Jesus, the apostles, the saints and the martyrs, aided and abetted by such distinguished spirits as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Socrates and Plato, with whom they could not have associated while on earth, were now interested in them, and communicating through their mediums.

To the mind of a Westerner, who is also a psychic investi-

gator, the plausibility of such professed spiritual contact with the souls of the departed was challenged. Granted that these souls had survived the change called death and continued to exist in higher planes of being, for want of any words to describe properly such dimensions, would they be apt to be at the beck and call of these obviously sincere and devout people, at any time their mediums wished to call them forth?

Reason and logic said, "No." If there was truth in the contention of some students of metaphysics that there was an elemental world of low and degraded spirits, similar to the Roman Catholic concept of purgatory, then was it possible that such spirits masquerading as great souls had attached themselves to the consciousness of these mediums? They were enjoying a parasitical, vicarious existence, preferring as close a contact with the physical as possible, rather than elevation to a spiritual realm, which would require, however painful, further soul development?

No easy answer could be given to this question. But Henry and I, and other observers, in our short time in the Philippines, had witnessed apparent healings through psychic surgery that the Spiritists claimed had been performed, in states of trance, by mediums under control of "the Holy Spirit" or higher spirit entities.

If true, and there seemed much evidence to indicate that a reasonable proportion of the healings had been genuine, how could they be scientifically explained? Was it possible that a higher spiritual force or electro-magnetic energy, associated with an intelligence beyond our comprehension, did exist and was ready to break through and manifest itself, if dedicated men and women, of simple faith, opened their minds and hearts to it, and made themselves receptive to its guidance and control?

The Spiritists were of Christian persuasion. Many still professed to be Roman Catholics who had embraced Spiritism. They believed in Christ. Their mediums, in many church services, brought through messages purported to be direct from Jesus. These messages, when analysed, were not profound. They

were not even well-phrased or expressed, in many instances, but they were delivered with great and sincere conviction, and they had undoubted impact upon Espiritista members.

I was impressed again with the vast appeal that the image of Jesus had for the masses of poor people. I asked myself, "Had Jesus been represented as having been born in luxurious surroundings, instead of a lowly stable, would people have had the same feeling of kinship for him?" The answer was obvious. The fact that he was of poor parentage, that he, too, had suffered, in his case, unto death, and that he had risen above it all, and held out hope of salvation to all mankind, had inspired the faith of millions.

How much was this faith, as expressed and demonstrated by the medium members of the Spiritist organisation, responsible for the inexplicable feats of psychic surgery which were apparently taking place?

Faith healing in itself was not new. Many ministers and laymen of many faiths had demonstrated and were demonstrating it, in various forms. It did not necessarily have to employ a belief in Christ, but it *did* have to exercise a belief in a higher power, which could be defined only as God. The recognition and acceptance of a divine source or Creator was a requisite in all healings. This was highly indicative that the human mind apparently, through meditation, consecration and developed states of receptivity, could unite with a healing energy and a higher intelligence, definitely beyond the five physical senses. When this happened, changes in the body chemistry had occurred; instantaneous healings had taken place; growths had withered and disappeared; eyesight and hearing had been restored; the lame had walked. How? Why?

These were some of the reasons that had impelled Henry and myself to journey these thousands of miles to the Philippines.

Tony Agpaoa stood apart from the Spiritists because he was not a member of their organisation. This did not mean that he did not believe in a spirit presence or spiritual guidance. It did not mean that he was opposed to the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas, although some of their members felt he was under

the influence of the Devil, who could also perform miracles. But Tony, as a Roman Catholic, maintained, as previously stated, that one could be spiritual and be attuned to the God-power or Holy Spirit, without the long ceremonies and rituals to which the Spiritists were welded.

Here was one of the basic mysteries associated with psychic surgery. Tolentino had expressed himself with great vigour and feeling on this point. He predicted that Tony would eventually "come to no good end" because of his flaunting this God-power through not expressing it under the guidance of the Espiritista group, giving his services absolutely without remuneration of any kind, to the union.

To be fair and unbiased, whether or not one can accept the concepts of the Spiritists, and believe with them that they actually are in daily touch with Jesus and the great souls of the past, whom they assert are seeking to bring to a sick and confused mankind increasing evidence that a spiritual world does indeed surround us, I am compelled to state that I have never been greeted or treated with greater kindness, friendliness or hospitality by any people, any time, anywhere. Nor have I read any finer statements of spiritual aims and purposes than are contained in the recently published official directory (1965–1966) of the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas, established in 1903.

I leave it to you to judge these statements for yourself. The opening page of the directory contains this "Greeting from the incoming general president," Tiburcio Ramirez:

> "At this crucial moment in the history of the entire world, an hysterical race to conquer space is being witnessed, the butchery of human beings under the guise of wars is being despicably perpetrated; human indecency is now in vogue; rampant robberies and hold-ups are a daily occurrence; destruction of properties is being done. I beseech my beloved brethren and sisters to be more discreet in their behaviour, calculating in their speech, careful in their thoughts, and wise in everyday tasks. For precipitated act, indiscriminate demeanour and uncontrolled thoughts may add more embers to the fire of hatred,

miasma of distrust, heinous desire for wordly things and poisonous egoism—these surely will greatly contribute to the unspeakable display of unprecedented wreckage, pernicious crimes and lamentable misery.

"I pray all of you to be more tolerant, indulgent, understanding and lovable, as they are, indeed, the real panacea for the various human ills."

(Malabon, Rizal, Philippines, February 20, 1966)

This "greeting" to Spiritist members would do credit to any admonitions that might have been given to any of our established spiritual organisations. Tiburcio Ramirez, as former chairman of the committee of mediums, then follows with a "personal request to all mediums," worthy of reproduction here, as evidence of the standard of spiritual conduct that is held up to those who assume "spirit communication" responsibilities.

MY REQUEST

As chairman of the committee on mediums, although unworthy, I am calling the attention of my sister-mediums and brother-mediums to my avid desire that they may be more active in the performance of their duties, so that Spiritism may be disseminated and that those who may be enslaved by misery and hardship in this life may find consolation and hope.

I, therefore, request mediums—

1. To fight valiantly any feeling that will entice them so that they may give more and more weight and worth to worldly things.

2. To be always deaf from the call of mundane desires, which surely offer you arrogance and danger;

3. Not to be dazzled by the glitters of earthly wealth, for worldly things will make them forget the purity of their task and their charitable work;

4. To suppress heinous ambitions and dubious dreams, so that they are the most outstanding medium in and out of the fraternity. Thus, they must always instil in their minds that they are but instruments of those above;

5. To be humble and meek at all times, for the humble and meek shall be called the sons of God:

6. To be sincere in the discharge of their duties, coupled with the purest charity and the refusal to gain pomposity. Thus, they will reap spiritual success;

7. To sow pure love, so as to reap happiness and peace;

8. To saturate themselves with pure and holy tasks, in order that they may not be overcome by earthly and pernicious feelings and desires;

9. To avoid adding their own thoughts to the spirit communications, or attribute unto themselves gifts from God which are surely not possessed by them, for in so doing, they are veritably committing fraud and deceit;

10. To concentrate always and meditate, punctuated by the reading of papers or books holy in nature, as well as of the Bible; and to fill their minds with things conducive to peace and holiness, so that elevated spirits may be attracted and communicate through them, for the benefit of those who are in need of holy guidance;

11. To tear the cloth of egotism and selfishness, for the same shall surely poison the spirit.

What I have stated here are but few of those that must be done by the medium. I, therefore, hope that my brethren-mediums and sister-mediums will give singular attention and consideration to this REQUEST.

May peace go with us always!

Such instructions could well match those that might be given to any individual desirous of developing extra-sensory powers because it is necessary to make the mind a clear channel and this is not possible if it is filled with destructive emotions, desires and egoistic tendencies.

The next page in the official directory contains this "message" from the president general, Dominador Viola:

With all my heart and soul, I greet all the brethren as disciples and supporters of Spiritism.

In our directory can be noted numbers of centres, and members included, proving that our doctrine of Spiritism is being accepted by the masses. But Spiritism, as often imparted by the spirits, is not the building of many centres and the

acquisition of more members, nor the treatment and healing of the sick. All this is but secondary.

Spiritism is the worship of God in spirit and in truth, which is to say, follow the God's mandate and live it in society. Because of this, we must be careful and always measure studiously all we are going to think, what we are going to say, and more so, what we are going to do. All must be based upon reason and love. We must be sincere with our duties, because beginning today until the reckoning day, time and history will bear witness to our deeds and what we are worth.

We must know and implant on our minds, heart and feelings, to our soul, that we alone, and only we, are responsible for our deeds, good or bad. We will even bring them beyond the grave in the other life in order to answer and receive its compensation or its opposite and equal reaction.

In view thereof, although we have complete freedom, we must use this freedom not by way of the flesh only but through love and service to each other, because in truth, one is for all and all for one.

Do good and live in goodness. Let us talk on holiness that is possible and practicable, for more than this is pride where we shall not succeed, rather we are apt to meet defeat.

Again, practical wisdom which if followed and practised sincerely by all Spiritist members, and people of any or all faiths could not help but improve their spiritual natures.

The front features in the official directory are climaxed by a statement from the vice-president, G. E. Tolentino:

ONWARD—COURAGE—FRIENDS

Because of the workings of superior or holy spirits through spirit mediums of our fraternity, the Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas, in preaching the kingdom of God and in healing spiritual and physical ailments both locally and telepathically, including surgery absolutely without drugs, without anesthesia, and the patients made whole then and there, miraculously and without remuneration whatsoever, that can never be duplicated by medical practitioners in the flesh, now known by spiritually-minded people all over the world, the holy spirit of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ of Nazareth, through

apport, sent us his message in recognition of our purely spiritual and humanitarian mission, as follows:

"In these bright and sunny regions, where the human thought could hardly reach, the echo of your works and mine have immensely moved my heart. Oh what a flood of joy I feel seeing you who carry on my doctrine! No, nothing could ever equal the testimony of your good thoughts.

"You have seen, my friends, the idea of regeneration launched by me long, long ago on this earth—persecuted, detained for a while under the pressure of tyrants. It shall always march along without obstacles illuminating the way to humanity, for so long a time buried in darkness.

"All great and disinterested sacrifice, my friends, sooner or later bears its fruits. My martyrdom had proven it to you, my blood shed because of my doctrine will save humanity, will erase all faults of great sinners. Onward—courage—my friends.

"JESUS"

It is one of the sacred messages in microscopic handwritings by various superior holy spirits that fell in our midst from nowhere through our late spirit medium Bro. Juan Naval, in my big collection, the only kind in existence.

G. E. TOLENTINO
Vice-president, UECDFI

2012 Retiro St.,
Sampaloc, Manila

A message direct from Jesus! Contained in an apparently unopened nut, which fell, among others, also containing microscopic messages on tissue-thin paper, embedded therein—messages which could be read only by use of a magnifying glass!

Tolentino has hundreds of such messages on display in his home and believes implicitly in them. He has shown me how the nutshells had to be cracked and forced open and how the messages were pressed deeply within. You do not argue with this fine, elderly gentleman. You permit him to place his interpretation on these "psychic" happenings. But you respect the sincerity and devoutness with which Tolentino and his Spiritist

members follow their beliefs as you observe with what humbleness and graciousness they put them into human practice.

Somehow you find yourself wishing that the average churchgoer or non-churchgoer in the United States, or in other countries, could be as deeply moved by his own faith. You know that much good would come of it, whether or not this faith could be scientifically supported or proved in the laboratory.

Since few who will read this book will have occasion to visit the Philippines, I have sought to pass on to you as true a picture as possible of the spirit and nature of the people whose beliefs have produced unusual and inexplicable healings. Allowing for superstitution, delusion, self-hallucination and fraud, there is still a substantial residue that cries out for more study and research. It is just possible that it will lead, eventually, to discovery of spiritual truths of inestimable value to all humanity.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GOOD AND EVIL FORCES

IS THERE SUCH A THING as an evil force? Can a "sensitive," who makes a channel of his mind through developed techniques of concentration, meditation and fasting, be influenced by evil as well as good intelligences?

What happens when men and women become entranced, when they turn themselves over to the control of subconscious influences or apparent discarnate entities who take command of their bodies and perform operations and do other things that are beyond the individual's normal, conscious capacity?

Can we accept the possibility that spirit intelligences *do* exist and manifest through dedicated men and women who call themselves "Spiritists" and who believe their lives are guided directly by Jesus, his apostles, the saints, guardian angels and even relatives and friends of those who have left this life, or great souls who have come back to the earth, to give aid and wisdom to struggling man?

No, we in the Western world, brought up on cold reason and logic, steeped in materialism, are prone to reject all this as superstitious belief and self-delusion. We may have respect for the sincerity and devotion of Spiritist believers, but we just "know" that Jesus and his band, as one hard-boiled, unfeeling sceptic said to me, "aren't hanging around to give little piffling messages of no real significance on demand, any time any medium elects to receive them."

What is it, then, that is apparently manifesting through these people, that gives them such undeniable faith and devotion, such demonstrable love and tolerance and kindness for others that Americans, who have been exposed to their hospitality uniformly, say they would like to go back to experience again

such an atmosphere of affection beyond racial, cultural and religious differences?

We say they are guillible, naïve, ignorant, uneducated, child-like, even primitive—by our standards. Yet, most of them living under conditions of poverty we could not and would not accept, bear it with a cheerfulness and a complacency that we might call slothful indifference.

Have they been mesmerised by their belief which gives them a desire to serve the ills of mankind as selflessly as possible, with no thought of monetary reward? They really feel that God is working through them; that the "Holy Spirit" can and does manifest through the mind and heart of those who free their consciousness of hate and prejudice, and look within for guidance and strength to meet the complexity of problems that man's wrong thinking has created for him in this outer, material world.

You observe all this as you get to know the Spiritists. You find yourself in conflict with your intellect, training, background and experience. How can you manage to meet them on a common ground of understanding and separate the true from the false in their approach to life, and in yours?

Belk, for example, as we observed certain practices of different mediums and heard their professed spirit messages, was outspoken in his denunciation of what he considered out-and-out trickery or, at best, self-hallucinated fraud. He said to me many times: "I just can't stand sham and hypocrisy in any form. I'm sorry if I'm not diplomatic about it when I meet these people. They may be sincere, but they must be terribly gullible if they believe some of these things. And, despite all this, I see genuine phenomena mixed up in all this. How do you explain that? Is there a war going on between good and evil forces? Is there some organised attempt on some higher plane to keep man from learning the truth?

"Take Tolentino, for instance, as sweet and kindly a gentleman as you'll ever find. Yet I see some of his own people pulling the wool over his eyes—deliberately fooling him, in my opinion, with sleight-of-hand stunts. How can he be so simple and

trusting? Is his will to believe so strong that he doesn't want to see the obvious? I've seen enough to know there is something to psychic surgery, how much yet has to be determined by more research and investigation. But it seems to me the Spiritists could help their own cause by doing a little psychic house-cleaning."

An answer to his commentaries, in part, was inadvertently given by Leonora Pangan, the registered Filipino nurse, turned Spiritist, herself a developed medium and spirit message-bearer, who, in a letter to Bobbie Gironda in America, wrote:

"There is supposedly a very rich scientist by the name of Henry Belk"—Henry, of course, is not a scientist, nor ever claimed to be. "This same fellow thinks Tony is the only true medium and that all others, including my humble self, are frauds.

"I feel that he is free to form his own opinion about us, but I hope and pray that God will enlighten him better, I can assure you, however, that none among our bona fide mediums who are registered members of our spiritual organisation, has used mediumship fraudulently. It is those who were expelled from the fraternity and those not registered as mediums, Tony being one of them, who deliberately go against the rules, even charging patients.

"No, I do not know of any patient who died of an operation." —This had been rumoured. There are so many rumours that have to be run down in the search for truth in this area.

"As for Tony's powers—you know, the spiritual powers given to any medium do not entirely leave them, even after they misuse the gift. The ability to perform operations is there, but it is the kind of spirit that performs through them that is important. And this is revealed by the effect of the operation.

"Don't you know that even Satan can perform miracles? This I know—many patients operated on by Tony have gone to our bona fide mediums for further help. I am sorry, I have no available record of patients who have been treated by Tony.

"Last week, during our spiritual session at Brother Tolentino's house, Tony was there, but he did not perform any operations. I know there are patients going to his home where he operates, but because he is not a member of the fraternity, I never follow them up.

"During the years while he was still with us, I can vouch for all the operations performed by the Holy Spirit through him. He really had very amazing powers. He was then a very humble boy during those days. My sister, who sponsored his induction as a Spiritist, had been helping him in his material needs. Many of those who helped him gain spiritual gifts regret, very much, his drifting away from the fraternity.

"This is all I can tell you. I wish I could give you more concrete answers to your inquiries . . ."

Leonora Pangan is a seemingly dedicated person. I am sure the Spiritists attempt to adhere strictly to a high ethical code in so far as their mediums are concerned. Their attitude towards Tony, who was formerly identified with their group, is a case in point.

However, it is also apparent that Tony's growing fame has aroused feelings of jealousy. The Spiritists charge that Tony has permitted his ego to gain the ascendancy, has moved away from the God-power, and has surrendered himself, more and more, to evil influences which will cause him to commit fraud, at times, to impress people, especially foreigners. They say that when Satan moves in God moves out, and that many fine mediums have been ruined by just such an occurrence. Like a radio set, it can be tuned in and out of good and bad programmes. The sensitive mind of a medium can be played upon, unless controlled by strict and humble attunement to the spiritual side of life, and eventual evil control of his or her body can thus be gained.

How are we to judge and evaluate such contentions? I know, from my own experience as a sensitive (as I have sought to explain in my book, *How to Make ESP Work for You*) that it *is* possible to tune in, mentally, on destructive as well as constructive "vibrations." What do I mean by "vibrations"? A scientist shies away from such a term, but there are really no words to describe the manner in which certain impressions come to a genuine sensitive. How am I able, on occasion, to tell a person over a long-distance phone, whom I never knew existed until that moment, accurate intimate things about a

murder or a missing plane or person? The "knowledge" is instantly there, at the moment of concentration, carrying its own proof that, if it did not come from the mind of the caller, and this could not have been the source in many instances, the knowledge *had* to exist in some form, somewhere.

Incredible as it may sound, this has been proved beyond a doubt, not only by me but by many other sensitives. So, if we can, at times, tune in to conditions around us, from the minds of others, living and dead, and bring in verifiable information, and even relive, through feeling and mental imagery, experiences of the past, or take on situations occurring in the minds of fellow humans at the moment, what does all this indicate?

That we may be surrounded by a host of unseen witnesses, by vibratory (that word again) records of the past, containing an exact recording of everything that has ever happened, down to the minutest detail in the life of every individual who has ever lived, down to the present moment of everyone living now, and who is yet destined to live—the recording never stops. It automatically continues in some form of "mental ether" or dimension not yet determined, but which occasionally impinges itself upon the consciousness of certain sensitives who can bring through fragments of these experiences and describe them.

I can only hint at this vast subject now, as we attempt to get a realistic grip on what is happening in the Philippines, the Hawaiian Islands, Africa, Brazil, and other countries, where native doctors are credited with the performance of healing miracles. Whatever the power is—when it is genuinely tapped —it *has* to exist in the extra-sensory realm, even though it functions through the physical body.

Something non-physical happens when sensitives like Peter Hurkos and Gerard Croiset are "on target". There is a percentage of error in the "psychic work" of these two men, and in my own efforts at extra-sensory perceptive performance, but the "beyond chance ratio" indicates, again and again, the true existence of so-called supernormal phenomena.

Does the exercise of spiritual powers require a Christian faith, a belief in Christ and the "Holy Spirit"? Do these powers

belong to an exclusive society? Can they be so limited that a believer in any other religion outside that of Christianity is barred from such a manifestation? Are we to attribute the demonstrations of healing or any other types of psychic phenomena, if they are performed by any individuals "outside the fold," as the "works of the Devil"?

Hardly! The Creator of this limitless universe has provided evolving man with all of the forces within and without himself, regardless of his religious concepts, through which to elevate himself in every material and spiritual way, if he so chooses.

It is evident that "like attracts like" in the realm of mind and that the ancients were right when they said, "As a man thinketh in his mind and in his heart—so is he." An eminent scientist once told me that there is one basic essential which man must exercise if he is to rise above himself, and tap higher energies and intelligence. He must, somehow, develop the ability to put his own ego, his vaunted self-importance, out of the way and *believe without a doubt!*

"When man is able to do this," the scientist contended, "he enters a state of consciousness wherein his capability has no limitations, except those he ordains unto himself."

Is this the realm that all genuine healers, of any and all types of healing, enter?

Do terminologies such as God-power, holy spirit, protector, guardian angels, and personalities of great souls, great spiritual beings and other spirit influences, have a bearing in this mysterious healing dimension?

Not likely, except as devices upon which to fix one's faith. A belief that Jesus, or a revered apostle, or some saint is personally present and aiding in the healings can well be the *activating* force. When inspirational thoughts and messages are received, if mediums interpret them as coming from Jesus or any number of high spirit intelligences, we do not have to accept this as literally true.

The all-important questions are: Do people get healed? Are they being helped? Why then limit the concept of the higher power that is functioning through the mind of the believer?

Why not look beyond the rituals, ceremonies and incantations, the different methods and techniques used, and try to isolate and understand the working of the power itself?

M. H. Tester, who discovered his healing gift after he was cured by psychic means, has this to say:

"A healer is an apparatus for receiving the *life force*. He has the ability to transfer it into a *vibration* that can benefit the human frame; and to focus it on those areas that need the regenerative powers.

"As long as he keeps himself spiritually and personally immaculate, makes himself freely available to those who ask for help, and does not prostitute the gift that he has, there is no reason why he cannot continue his healing function for the full span of his earthly existence.

"The time is ripe for the full scope of spiritual healing to receive the widest publicity. It is not faith healing where the patient can be convinced of the body's self-healing ability. It is not some form of religious conviction that pushes pain and disease into the background. It is not psychic therapy for removing psychosomatic symptoms. It is not hypnotism, mind over matter, Coueism, Mesmerism or Christian Science.

"Spiritual healing brings the life force to your body. It is refined and focused on the diseased areas. If a man has had a leg amputated, he cannot grow a new one. But this is the only type of limitation I am prepared to accept for spiritual healing.

"I have seen backs straightened, swellings disappear, limbs lengthened, and almost every major defect of the human body corrected by healing. I accept no limitation other than the inability of the human species to grow new limbs or organs.

"Healing comes from God. The regenerative forces follow natural laws but are otherwise omnipotent. Who are you or I to impose our feeble limitations?"

Who are we, indeed, with our minds ordinarily filled with fears, doubts, worries and apprehensions, with feelings of hate, resentment, jealousy, prejudice and lust? It would take a "high spiritual vibration" to counteract these and to restore an electrochemical balance in the human system.

The remarkable American man-and-wife healing team of Ambrose and Olga Worrall emphasise this in their fine book, *The Gift of Healing*. They have proved, through scientific testing, that "the power of healers" is an electronic current that can be registered on X-ray film. An electronic scientist, at the headquarters of the Laymen's Movement, a non-sectarian men's organisation in Rye, New York, conducted an experiment using a specially prepared dental X-ray film attached by adhesive tape to the palms of four spiritual healers. He obtained, so it was reported, X-ray evidence of the generation of electronic current of varying degrees in the hands of three of the healers. The scientist and his associates also made tests on persons who were *not* healers. In every instance, there was no reaction on the film.

Ambrose Worrall is an aeronautical, mechanical and electronics engineer who serves as a consultant to the Martin Company of Baltimore. Mrs. Worrall is director of the healing clinic at the Mt. Washington Methodist Church, Baltimore.

Mr. and Mrs. Worrall refuse to resort to "gimmicks" of any kind, and will not give a consultation to anyone who has not first been examined by a doctor. They emphasise that prayer is the most important factor in their treatments. They make it clear *that God alone can heal*, and that they can only help cultivate a worshipful state so that others may commune with God.

This brings up the question of faith as exercised by the patient himself. There is no doubt that faith plays a powerful part in all forms of healing. The more receptive a patient can make his mind to the healing treatment being administered, the more effective this treatment will ordinarily be. However, I observed in the psychic surgery work in the Philippines that it was not so much the faith of the patients as that of the healers which seemed to bring about a desired result.

Afflicted persons would come to these psychic healers as a "last hope," desperate for relief from their sufferings, but doubtful of results, even while lying on the table. Their surprise and delight were immediately evident when the operation was completed and they found themselves apparently healed, ready

to take up their ordinary activities as though their illness had been nothing but a bad dream.

In these instances, it was what was done *to* them, rather than *through* them, which appeared to count most. But most healers have different, individual methods to accomplish the same healing results.

For example, Worrall states in his book: "One patient assured me that she had lived an exemplary life, but that in a previous incarnation she had committed sins for which she now was being punished by illness and suffering. Before we could begin to help alleviate her suffering, I had to make her realise how she, herself, by this attitude, could be blocking the force that could bring help."

Setting up obstructions in the mind can definitely prevent healings.

The Worralls' testimony as to how they know what is wrong with a patient interested me extremely because it so closely parallels what Tony has tried to explain to me as to his almost instant awareness of the nature of physical illness. He declared over and over again, when I would try to get details on this important point, "I can't tell you, except when I have the patient before me, no voice speaks to me—*I just know!*"

And Ambrose Worrall, on page 152 of his *The Gift of Healing*, gives a similar report:

> "In spiritual healing, *knowledge* often seems to come instantly, without effort or even awareness of how it reaches us. When I was younger, I would see a small ball of light about the size of a pea. It was like the dancing ball in the old-fashioned 'movie sing.' This dancing light would go directly to the place where my hands should be placed. Olga saw this light many times when she was in the room with me while I worked with a patient. In recent years, I do not see this light. *I seem to know without knowing how I know exactly what to do*!"

Take two types of healers. One purportedly enters the body with his hands. The other demonstrably heals the body internally, without opening the body and going inside. Yet each possibly calls upon the same intelligence, the same energy,

employing it in a different way to accomplish comparable results.

Laying on of the hands is involved in both cases—although the Worralls also heal at any distance—just as we now know that telepathy is subject to no barriers in time and space!

Everything must, therefore, be mind, essentially; mind expressing through matter—our physical bodies. If mind did not express through form, we could not bring about changes in form by changes of mind.

But how much is the mind influenced by other minds, incarnate and discarnate, or good and evil forces with which it may be surrounded and to which the mind may be attuned?

The Worralls believe in spirit communication and often use their mediumistic ability in their work to bring consolation, or assurance, or vital information to different men and women who are unhappy or disturbed, lacking in faith, or grieving over the loss of a loved one by death. In this area, their practices are not too unlike those of the Spiritists in the Philippines.

Be this as it may, we can best keep free of these speculative areas and rest secure in the faith and the knowledge that a higher intelligence, God-power if you will, actually dwells in our consciousness which, as we engage in prayerful meditation, can and will afford us a goodly measure of guidance and protection.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

DR. MOTOYAMA TESTS TONY

"IF YOU REALLY WANT TO find out what a man is like," said Henry Belk, "live with him day and night for a few days or weeks."

This remark was made to me after he had taken Tony from the Philippines to Taiwan and Hong Kong and on to Tokyo, where they spent a week in the company of Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama and his associates at the Institute of Religious Psychology. Here Tony was given a series of tests to determine if scientific instrumentation could record any evidence of energies beyond the physical, functioning through his mind and body.

"Tony was with me, day and night," said Henry. "I had every opportunity to study him away from his natural habitat, to observe his mental attitude, personal habits and inclinations. I wanted to see what his interests and desires might be, removed from any possibly inhibiting conditions in the home environment. I gave him chances for 'wine, women and song,' if he wanted them. But, though Tony would take a beer and would seemingly enjoy the entertainment of a night club, and would talk to attractive women he met, this was as far as his interest went. He made a fine impression on my friends and business associates, was self-contained, pleasant-mannered and excellent company at all times.

"We talked of many things, his work and his philosophy. He rang true to me under this close scrutiny. In Tokyo, I am sure he impressed Motoyama very favourably. After this personal experience with him, which was worth a great deal to me, I can only say that, if Tony isn't genuine, he is deceptive beyond belief."

Some weeks after Tony's visit to Tokyo, I received this first report, dated March 30, from Dr. Motoyama, of the tests he had conducted:

> "The analysis and investigation of the data obtained from the experiments on Tony have just been finished.
>
> "Generally, the following was made clear: When I let Tony (an agent) concentrate his supernormal power on the percipient (receiver) in the experiment (the room was perfectly partitioned with a screen or another thing so that there was, in all respects, no clue of sensory perception between them) the percipient showed remarkable change regarding electroencephalogram, plethysmogram,* respiration and GSR readings in comparison with those during time of control. And Tony's autonomic nervous system controlling the heart, the stomach, the genital and urinary organs are quite different from those of ordinary persons.
>
> "By the end of April, the English translation of this paper is to be completed. I will send you it as soon as it is finished."

This report recalled the initial attempted test Hiroshi had made in Tony's home in the Philippines when his sensitised apparatus had "given up the ghost" on the first try. Perhaps it was a coincidence, but a remarkable one, that his instruments should have "blown "when Tony turned on this "invisible power," which had now been successfully recorded in these extensive Tokyo experiments.

I now remembered a further test that Motoyama had arranged with Tony when his own machine had not worked. He made an appointment for Tony at the University of the Philippines Medical School so that he could check his brain wave reactions on its electroencephalograph. Again, Motoyama had obtained a recording of Tony's mind and body in a normal, relaxed state. Then, when he told Tony to let this "God-power" manifest through him, as it apparently did when he was operating, the electroencephalograph recording of his brain wave patterns took on an immediate change. Hiroshi brought back the graphic gyrations made by the needle and it looked

* Determining changes in the size of a part due to alteration in its vessels

like the seismographic recordings of a major earthquake. So, it was evident, even then, that whatever force or energy was generated in Tony's mind, or functioning through it, could be measured by instruments.

It was, therefore, exciting to me now, to receive this much more evidential confirmation from Motoyama. I eagerly awaited the paper he had prepared on it, with all tabulated data, for scientific study and evaluation.

It had been Dr. J. B. Rhine, then of Duke University, world-famous pioneer investigator of extra-sensory perception, who had recommended the services of Hiroshi to Belk. We were indeed deeply indebted to him because Hiroshi proved to have great human warmth, integrity and scientific efficiency.

I came to appreciate these qualities even more during the several days I spent in Japan, en route back to the States, with my friend, Dr. Wanderman. Hiroshi invited us to his attractive home to have dinner with his beautiful, gracious wife and wide-eyed, lively children and his remarkable mother. She is a renowned sensitive, whose spiritual guidance had meant much not only to Hiroshi but many notable figures in her country. She placed herself in a trance, a number of times, during our dinner occasion, and gave us impressions which were exceedingly accurate. She had an air of quiet majesty and authority about her, and a spiritual quality that cast a spell over all who were present. Included was a famous biochemist friend of Hiroshi's, Dr. Hideo Warren Toyoda.

During our dinner discussion, I remember Dr. Toyoda saying: "A new age is here. Medicine and religion may come together again in a way which will be just a little different from the one we had experienced in the Middle Ages."

Later I received a letter from him, expressing his appreciation of the visit Dr. Wanderman and I had made to Japan, in which he said:

> "It was more wonderful than anyone could expect. It was the first time that I have openly discussed matters related to the spiritual phase of man, in terms of science and technology, with people from the U.S.A.

"I have been studying it since 1928, as one of the chemists or medical men. My experiences have proved that, when I talked about medicine and spiritual life, I used to get into troubles—what I usually call 'irreversible reaction.'

"Hiroshi and I will co-operate to do anything within our capacity to reach our common goal."

It was tremendously inspiring to me to find such a spirit of understanding reciprocity existing between people of different races, Filipinos, Japanese and Americans. How insignificant different colours of skins, traditions and individual beliefs were when we met on the level of scientific and spiritual aspirations!

When we arrived at the Motoyama home we discovered that Hiroshi was also a Shinto priest, with a beautiful temple in the grounds near his residence and the separate building housing his Institute of Religious Psychology! Here was a most unusual combination of scientific and spiritual interests in one man!

Before leaving the home and the highly spiritual presence of Hiroshi's mother, she seemed deeply moved as she made a prediction: "You and Dr. Wanderman have been brought to Japan on a sacred mission. Dr. Wanderman will always be the pure scientist, not moved on one side or the other, which is good. You, Mr. Sherman, will move on both sides, with my son, Hiroshi, in the difficult times to come for all mankind."

In a letter written to me on February 17, 1966, Hiroshi made a preliminary commentary on the tests with Tony:

"Tony came to Japan on February 6 and returned to Manila on the 14th. In the test, when I let Tony send his power to my mother, making Tony an agent, and my mother a percipient, really remarkable change was shown on both of them at the same time concerning the mental activity, the activity of the heart, respiration and the activities of the autonomic nerves of the whole body.

"So, it may well be said that the experiment had much significance. Besides I made an examination of the reaction of the autonomic nerves controlling each organ to electric stimulus and ESP test, from which significant results were obtained respectively."

I have before me, as I write the voluminous report of Dr. Motoyama, entitled:

Whether PSI is able to have direct influence on the mind and body of others, or not?
Physiological and psychological investigation
on the psi ability of Antonio Agpaoa

It is of sufficient size and content to impress any scientist, which I am not. But, even as a layman, with some authoritative knowledge of mind, emotions and extra-sensory perception, I can readily understand and appreciate its significance. The paper is far too technical to do more than highlight its test procedures and results here, but it can be made available for any scientists or doctors to study.

Dr. Motoyama's introduction reads as follows:

> From January 13 to 27, I observed the miraculous operations which are conducted by Antonio Agpaoa, a spiritual person, resident in Quezon City, Philippines. He, without giving the patient any preliminary suggestion, hypnotism or drugs, only purifies with alcohol or pure water, the skin at the upper part of the diseased part on which he is going to make an operation. Then he suddenly inserts his bare hands into the diseased part, for example into the abdomen, and takes out cancer, sarcoma or inflamed part that caused the disease concerned. But no scar remains on the skin after having taken out the cancer. The patient feels little or no pain during the operation. He finishes such operation in three to ten minutes, even if it is ventrotomy of the stomach or ovariotomy. The patient is convalescing satisfactorily and shows almost perfect recovery. And most of the patients were, what is more surprising, able to walk for themselves, just after the operation.
>
> But readers may think that it must be some trick or that all the observers must have been put under a kind of group hypnotism. I thought so when W. H. Belk told me in Japan about the matter. It sounded very strange to me at that time because I had never heard or experienced such a thing. But I had a chance, fortunately, to go to the Philippines to aid Belk. I came to think the Agpaoa's miraculous operations or his spiritual faculty are

worth being investigated, having seen them with my own eyes and having had a talk with Agpaoa.

Agpaoa led a secluded life in a mountain when he was nine years old, practised austerities while fasting, and offered prayers to God. He had such religious exercise several times every year from the age of nine to sixteen. And he was a vegetarian until the age of twenty-one. It is said that the longest practice of fasting he made in those days continued for forty-five days. His spiritual faculty was thus raised higher and higher. He has been doing such miraculous operations as above stated since he was nine years old. It is said, too that when he once watched a flower intently, it withered away by his concentration. On hearing this I devised the experimental method to measure his spiritual faculty.

Dr. Motoyama then states, "*The purpose of the investigation is to examine whether Tony's power is able to have influence on the mind and body of the subject without any physical means or any sensory clue.*"

His description of the technique used in this investigation is worthy of repetition here:

The room consists of a machine room and a laboratory. It is partitioned with a heavy wall of concrete. Communication between the two rooms was done only through interphone.

In the laboratory, two beds were laid apart and a wooden screen set up between them for a partition. The agent (Agpaoa) lay on his back in the bed which is located on the right side toward the door opening on the corridor. The percipient lay in the left bed.

Then, different electroencephalograph electrodes were attached to the left frontal region and left occipital region. An indifferent electrode was attached to the left ear, and monopolar lead was made. An electrode of a pneumatograph was attached to the left nostril, an electrode of a plethysmograph to the left forefinger, and electrodes of GSR to the left palm and the left carpus.

Regarding the percipient, every electrode was fixed on the right side for reasons of the position of electrode box and the length of lead. Regarding only the agent, a stimulus elec-

trode to give him a sign, was fixed on the outer side of the right carpus. The stimulus was given intermittently two or three times a second with 30–35V and 1mA of direct current. It was the least stimulus quantity within the limits of being perceptible because its purpose was only to register the beginning and the end of concentration.

Agent and percipient had no communication with each other through sensory clue or physical means. If either of the two utters a voice or moves, corresponding changes are shown on GSR, electroencephalograph, pneumatograph and plethysmograph. Such changes were checked and excluded in both cases of the agent and the percipient in analysing data.

HOW INVESTIGATION WAS DONE

Before we began the measurement, first of all, we observed the plethysmograms of the agent and the percipient, shown on the oscillograph, and awaited the time when they became quiet, getting free from the strain and excitement due to the experiment. And we began measurement, which consists of control and concentration, when they became quiet.

At first, control was made. In the control, the electroencephalogram, plethysmogram, pneumatogram, and GSR-gram of the agent and the percipient in quiet condition, were measured at the same time for three minutes, and a mark was written on the recording paper every one minute.

Then, after 30 seconds to one minute, concentration was begun. For the first one minute of concentration, measurements were made regarding the agent and the percipient in a quiet condition. At the beginning of the next one minute, the agent was given a sign with electric stimulus, to concentrate his power on the percipient. At the end of the one minute, he was given a sign again, to stop concentrating his power on the percipient. And for the next one minute, measurement was made regarding the agent and the percipient in a quiet condition again.

Consequently, each case of control and concentration took three minutes. One time of the control above stated and the same of the concentration make "one run". The experiment had five runs in succession on each day. But there was an interval of one minute between every run.

These, in essence, were tests, but the analysis and evaluation of them after a week of such "runs" took weeks, following their recording and tabulation, with different subjects used against the one agent, Tony.

In all these tests, the agent and percipient clearly showed simultaneous changes in their minds and bodies during the periods when the agent was concentrating his power.

This led, in summarising, to the following conclusions as stated by Dr. Motoyama in his exhaustively impressive report:

> When the agent concentrated his (non-physical) power upon the percipient, there occurred changes in the percipient's mind and body. It was made clear on the basis of statistical calculation of the frequency of the changes in control cases, and the same in concentration cases, that the agent's nonphysical power had an influence on the percipent's mind and body. It is needless to say that, since this investigation is only a pilot test, many investigations should be repeated and the methods should be improved in the future. The following, I think, however, were made clear:
>
> 1. When the agent concentrates his non-physical power on the percipient, changes occur in the percipient's mind and body as well as in the agent's.
> 2. We can find out a fixed direction (becoming quiet or active) in the changes caused by the concentration in the percipient or in the agent.
> 3. Between the changes caused by the concentration in the agent and the same in the percipient, we can often find out a coincidence regarding the direction of the changes.

A scientist like Hiroshi must at all times observe caution in any reports or findings that are made public. It is difficult, on occasion, to curb enthusiasm and to put aside personal feelings particularly when one may be in conflict between religious (spiritual) and scientific interests and convictions.

Dr. Motoyama made his present position clear in his latest letter to me, in which he states:

> As a person who has had some religious experiences, I think such psychic surgery as Tony does is within the range of possi-

bility. But, as a scientist, I cannot say anything definite and have no right to endorse anything regarding Tony's psychic surgery. The investigation made of Tony in Tokyo was as to whether or not his psychic power is able to have any direct influence on the mind and body of others, and not on his psychic surgery.

I'll hold myself responsible for this experiment and its result. And the value which the experiment and the result will have will not change wherever it may be published. But this is not what proves at once that psychic surgery is the truth.

In order that Tony's psychic surgery may be proved as truth scientifically, various scientific investigations must be made further. If my paper serves for a hold or a first step for excellent scientists, especially medical ones, to make such scientific investigations, my duty at this time will be discharged.

As for the result of my experiment, it will be proved as scientific truth only after four or five series of re-examinations are done further and it is ascertained, again and again. So, please do not decide it at once as truth verified scientifically.

I think that we must get on with our studies patiently, deliberately and exactly in order to make clear the truth.

Motoyama, for whom I have boundless respect and deep regard, has done his research job well. He is right. There is much more research to be done. None of us, scientist or layman, associated with this investigation of psychic surgery, can do more than observe and report at this juncture.

But true or false, a large proportion of men and women, who have been and are being treated by healers professing psychic surgery abilities like Tony, are being helped. How is this possible, unless, despite any degree of fraud that might be charged against one or more of these mediums, there is nevertheless something of a higher spiritual nature taking place here?

A scientific measurement has been taken, indicating that Tony was able to demonstrate *non-physical powers*. As Motoyama states, "This may well have been a significant first step."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

BACK HOME IN THE STATES

IT WAS GOOD to be home after these few intensive weeks in the Philippines during which my sense of time got so mixed up I hardly slept at all. But I had brought back new perspectives and speculations which were to last, perhaps, for the rest of my life on this sadly disturbed, confused planet.

To be close to an inexplicable phenomenon, I had now discovered, was about as bewildering as to have been away from it. I knew little more about what was apparently happening, and the causative forces behind it, than I had before I departed. But the moment I was back, since some publications had printed the news that I had gone to the Philippines with Henry and others, I was met by a barrage of questions. They came by letter, by long-distance telephone, by personal visitation.

"Were Tony's psychic surgery operations on the level? Could he heal this or that? Should they jump on the first plane and fly to see him? When was he coming to the States? Where was he going to be in hiding? Could I reveal where that place might be? It was a matter of life and death. They were convinced that only Tony could save them since God was working through him."

What could I say to these inquirers? I realised that I was going to have to tell as much as I could reliably report about Tony, and what I felt I knew about the other faith and spirit healers I had met and observed. But it was quite another thing to assume the responsibility of recommending that afflicted men and women, in their desperate quests for healings, should

make the long, costly trip to the Philippines in the hope that Tony and others like him could heal them, when medical science, in some cases, had failed.

About this time, a friend wrote me from the coast conveying the news that Nelson Decker was giving talks on his experiences with Tony and other "psychic surgeons." He was also selling a loose-leafed, mimeographed pamphlet titled, *Psychic Surgery in the Philippines*. A copy was enclosed. It contained this statement on the front cover:

> Tells his personal story of months of study, training and practice of spiritual healing with Brother Terte and the Spiritists Healing Group in Baguio, and his initiation as a psychic surgeon under Tony Agpaoa in Manila.
>
> Share with Dr. Decker his amusing, sad, breathtaking and illuminating experiences with these remarkable Filipinos who work daily miracles of healing amid the poverty, the flies and the filth of this Oriental land.

Decker later granted me permission to quote from this pamphlet and added further material which I have recorded in Chapter 3.

It was now clearly evident to me that, despite Bob Swope's expressed desire not to publicise Tony's work until careful scientific research could be done, growing public interest was going to demand more and more information. It did not take a prophet to predict that the Philippines would soon become a new tourist mecca, the target for an increasing number of healing pilgrimages.

Two events then precipitated me into the national spotlight via radio and television.

The first event had to do with the publishing house of Prentice-Hall, Inc. They were about to bring out my latest book, *The New TNT—Miraculous Power Within You*, and wished me to go to the West Coast to help publicise this volume with personal appearances, lectures and radio and TV interviews.

The second event was brought about by Colorvision International, Inc., a new TV producing company. They placed me

under contract to host a series of thirty-nine half-hour colour television programmes, based upon authenticated case histories my ESP Research Associates Foundation had collected from people who had had supernormal experiences in the uncharted realm of thought-transference.

My permission was asked by Albert Gannaway, president of the company, for them to take an excerpt from the 16mm colour film Henry and I had made of Tony's operations, reduce it to 8mm and show it in a novel projector, with built-in screen, which looked and performed like a television set. Mr. Gannaway said he wanted to display this film of Tony's phenomenal psychic surgery in his exhibition room at the forthcoming convention of the National Association of Broadcasters, soon to take place at the Conrad Hilton hotel in Chicago.

I granted permission with the understanding that the Tony film sequence, showing him performing an apparent abdominal operation with his bare hands, was not to be made into an episode in the series but was only to be used to demonstrate that these extra-sensory powers of mind actually did exist.

With this accomplished, Martha and I were invited to Chicago to be guests of Colorvision International, Inc., at the convention, where we spent a hectic week. The Tony film proved the sensation of the convention. Delegates and visitors all but wore out the carpet leading to the Colorvision International suite. I was on call, day and night, to answer a cross-fire of questions from interested radio and TV station owners, producers, directors and other fascinated, if often unbelieving, viewers!

From Chicago, Martha and I motored across country to Los Angeles, where more radio and TV interviews were awaiting us, thence to Sacramento, San Francisco, and finally to Denver, and back to Arkansas, 8,000 miles in all. During this period I had been on between twenty to thirty radio and TV shows. Most of my time had been spent, on public demand, talking about Tony and psychic surgery!

In Los Angeles, shortly after I had started on the round of radio and TV appearances that Prentice-Hall, through its publicity agents, had lined up for me, I found it necessary to phone Bob Swope. I had talked with him once by long distance from Arkansas, upon my return from the Philippines, in an attempted show of friendship. At that time I told him that Henry and I had returned with colour motion pictures of Tony and his work, and that, when I came to the coast, we would be glad to share them. We would also be interested to seeing, in exchange, the pictures that Decker and he had made.

Bob's answer had been to give him a ring when I arrived on the coast and he would see what could be worked out. Now, in Los Angeles, on the phone, I found Bob cool and indefinite to my suggestion of a meeting. I explained that I was phoning specifically to ask him how much I was at liberty to speak about him and his investigation of Tony, because I was asked increasingly about the scientists who had been to the Philippines, at the same time as Henry and myself, observing Tony. I said I had tried to respect Bob's previous request to keep his name out, but I had learned there had been a newspaper item about him, his new Swope Foundation and the rumoured group behind him. It was obvious I could not help mentioning his name.

"No," said Bob, "I cannot deny, if my name is mentioned, that I was there, but, as I told you, I am not talking. I have nothing to say at this time."

When I reported Swope's attitude to Henry he sent Bob a telegram, followed by a letter, inviting and urging him to join with the Belk Research Foundation in a paranormal study of psychic surgery. He explained that this combined research of a highly controversial subject could accomplish more than separate, and what would appear to the public to be competitive, projects.

Henry's approach, in my opinion, was not too diplomatic, however well-intentioned. It brought this answer from Bob Swope, which I feel, in fairness to him, should be presented in its entirety:

Mr. W. H. Belk,
1934 N.E. 151st St.
Miami, Florida.

April 22, 1966

Dear Sir:

Your telegram was received on April 13, but its purpose was vague and return address omitted. Therefore I felt an answer was unnecessary.

Your letter and booklet were received on April 19, indicating you are in agreement with Sherman in publicising the phenomena of psychic surgery. This will gain personal acclaim and notoriety but is in no way associated with scientific objectivity. The TV circus currently conducted by Sherman on the West Coast has not convinced the public of the credibility of psychic surgery and has been the laughing stock of the scientific community.

I can understand Sherman's willingness to accept public ridicule since this publicity will help him sell books and lectures. I am not interested in selling books, lectures or gaining a public image through TV appearances. However, I am interested in both basic and applied research. For this reason I have established a research foundation with a highly qualified scientific team, political support and years of personal experience managing scientific programmes.

Psychic surgery presents technical implications that are beyond the comprehension of the layman and can only be evaluated under a laboratory environment by highly trained scientific minds.

I have briefed many medical doctors, psychiatrists, physicists, chemical and electronic engineers. All have accepted my analysis of the phenomena and several have offered to give up their careers and devote full time working for me on this programme, all phases of which have been progressing as planned.

Since our objectives are in complete disagreement, I see no way that our foundations could effectively work together.

Sincerely,

R. S. Swope

Swope Research Foundation,
P.O. Box 681.
Northridge, California.

Henry's reply was not as kindly as it might have been. It was the reaction of a man who had been hurt by rejection. But Henry did close by saying, "Wishing you and your group success, if we can be helpful please advise." This offer of Henry's, as well as mine, exists today.

In the light, however, of Bob Swope's stated policy of "no publicity and no public commentary," I was amazed, a few weeks later, to see a feature article about him in the *Cosmic Star*, a psychic newspaper, *not a scientific publication*, accompanied by a photograph of him seated beside his 16mm projector, under the front page caption:

Motion Pictures of Knifeless Psychic Surgeon Made Public

The article, written by Merle Gould, the editor, is reproduced, as follows:

> Tony Agpaoa, 27, the Filipino who operates with just the use of his hands, continues to make startling news! Within the last two weeks, numerous press conferences, TV shows and radio programmes have told of the fantastic exploits of the psychic surgeon.
>
> Dr. Nelson Decker, who first brought the news of the healer out in the open and gave the *Cosmic Star* an opportunity to publish the first close-up pictures, is preparing, in co-operation with Robert S. Swope, a film lecture tour across America. The inside story behind bringing Tony Agpaoa to America for investigation, demonstration and research is one of intrigue and mystery.
>
> I have sought out all sources of information because we felt that the *Cosmic Star* has a definite responsibility to hundreds of its subscribers who are willing to spend huge sums of money, time and effort to receive healing for themselves or loved ones.
>
> I was told several months ago by Dr. Nelson Decker, former chiropractor, to be patient and wait because a foundation was being established by Robert S. Swope, called the Swope Research Foundation, P.O. Box 681, Northridge, California,

and that this organisation was to try to bring Tony here to the U.S. and, with careful and controlled supervision, this phenomenon would be studied. But other groups across the nation who are not working directly with the foundation released news and colour films to the press media and stirred up a great deal of excitement.

I was personally invited by Mr. Swope to see the 16mm colour film taken of at least a half-dozen very convincing operations.

I saw with my own eyes, as did two of my close friends, one a prominent national radio writer, and the other a highly skilled physician and surgeon, what appeared to be Tony passing his hand over the area to be operated on of the patient, the body opening, Tony reaching in and removing defective parts or growths, and then the body closing.

Several times during the showing, I had to turn away as the operations were so gory, and yet the patient seemed to remain fully conscious, feeling absolutely no pain. No anesthesia was used and within a few minutes the patient jumped off the table and went about his or her business. This I saw over and over again on film.

In my opinion, each of the men I have interviewed who witnessed these operations have intelligence and integrity. Mr. Swope, who resides in a beautiful home with a lovely and gracious wife and five children, is a prominent astro-physicist and holds several degrees. He says that he is willing to lay his personal reputation on the line, as were other close medical doctor associates of his, vouching for the authenticity of these miraculous operations.

Dr. Nelson Decker, who accompanied Mr. Swope on the last trip to the Philippines, is now publishing a book containing colour and black and white pictures for the public to see.

Some interesting notes from Mr. Swope contained the following: He says that when Tony operates, he is able to see various colours on the surface of the body around the infected area. If he sees red or yellow, he stops immediately, for he knows that he cannot continue for fear of the patient's life. He does use an assistant occasionally and says that Tony's hands will tingle just before he commences the actual operation. He sometimes uses a small roller vibrator successfully on certain

patients without piercing the body. He calls this magnetic healing.

I am including the latest known up until now secret address where Tony, himself, can be located in the Philippines.

One of the most controversial and popular television programmes on the coast is "The Louis Lomax Show." He is an internationally-famous Negro author, lecturer and commentator. Most of the guests whom he interviews are chosen because of "far out or off-beat subjects" they may represent. My interest in "psychic surgery" certainly qualified.

When I was invited to appear, Lomax requested that I bring my portable Colorvision projector containing the filmed sequence of Tony performing an abdominal operation so that he could have a look at it, before we went in front of the television cameras.

"It sounds absolutely unbelievable to me," he said.

Some fifteen minutes before video-recording time, I was ushered into Lomax's dressing room back stage. He was in the act of making up.

"Set the box up here on my dressing table and plug it in," he directed. "I might as well tell you before you start that, from what I've heard, I don't believe it, and I doubt if I'll believe it after I've seen it."

"You're the judge," I said, and turned the picture on.

Lomax, eyebrow pencil raised, took a look and held the pencil suspended in mid-air.

As Tony's hands apparently opened up the flesh and went into the interior of the abdomen he exclaimed, "I swear he's *really* doing it!"

At this moment, Mrs. Morris, co-producer of the show, came in, took one look, and went out again. "I can't stand the sight of blood!" she said.

At the finish, Lomax said: "Well, you've got me wondering. I just don't know what to think! They say seeing is believing—but . . . I just don't know!"

He made a similar comment on opening our interview:

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is something . . . well, I'm not

going to try and describe it, I'm just going to turn that job over to Mr. Sherman and let *him* try to explain. It's about a man who is reported to be performing major operations with his bare hands! That's right—*his bare hands!* Don't ask *me* how he does it! I saw a movie of him doing it, just before we came on the air. And if this is true . . . ! Mr. Sherman—you take it from there!"

I *did* take it for about eight uninterrupted minutes, a most gracious consideration shown me by an open-mouthed Louis Lomax, and what appeared to be an equally open-mouthed studio audience. At the finish I held up and described a series of 8 × 10 inch glossy black and white pictures of progressive steps taken by Tony in the performance of a similar abdominal operation. The TV cameras came in close on these pictures so that they filled the viewers' television screens.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, what do you think?" asked Lomax. "I'm going to keep out of this—it's away beyond me! But I'd like to say to Mr. Sherman that while he has been telling about his fantastic psychic surgery, our producer has been on the long-distance phone talking to one of the scientists who was with Mr. Sherman in the Philippines. His name is Dr. Seymour S. Wanderman, of New York City." Then, turning to me, after this surprise announcement, Lomax said, "Would you like to hear what Dr. Wanderman had to say to the questions we put to him?"

"Yes," I replied. "I pretty well know what he would have said."

"We asked him these questions and got these replies," said Lomax, referring to a slip of paper that had been handed him, off camera.

" 'Dr. Wanderman—were you in the Philippines with Harold Sherman?' "

" 'Yes, I was.' "

" 'Did you see the *same* operation that Harold Sherman saw?' "

" 'Yes!' "

" 'Did you see *what* Harold Sherman saw?' "

" 'NO!' "

" 'Did you see Tony open and close the body?' "

" 'NO!' "

" 'Do you believe he was even *in* the body?' "

" 'NO!' "

" 'Do you have anything further to say?' "

" 'No—give my regards to Harold Sherman!' "

While Lomax was reading the questions and answers, the TV cameras were full on me, with close-ups of my face, so that the viewers could study my reactions. Since I was already familiar with Cy Wanderman's attitude towards Tony, it had not come as a shock. The only element of surprise was that he would have been quite as outspoken on the air. I might have expected him to have said something like: "I am not convinced. I feel much more research will be necessary before I can venture any conclusive scientific opinion. This is all I can say at the present time."

However, Dr. Wanderman had apparently decided on an all out condemnation of Tony and his work.

"Now, Mr. Sherman, what do you say to that?" demanded Lomax, with all eyes on me.

"He is entitled to his opinion," I answered. "I have great regard and respect for him."

There was a commercial break which was to be followed by a "dock" in which people from the studio audience are invited to question the guest.

"You're not upset by Dr. Wanderman's comments?" Lomax asked me in this interlude.

"No," I said. "There is bound to be great scepticism, particularly on the part of the medical profession, and we don't know all the answers. Much of what I saw is still a mystery to me."

When the programme resumed, a woman in the dock asked me how Tony could use a knife and then close a wound and have it heal without a scar. I had to explain that, so far as I could see, no knife had been used. This seemed to confuse the woman even more. The audience laughed as, shaking her head, she left the dock.

The next questioner, awaiting his turn, was a cultured-looking Negro. He commanded instant attention as he stepped with quiet dignity into the dock and said: "My name is Frederic Guirma. I am a native of Upper Volta, South Africa. I have been associated with the UN. I am here in Los Angeles taking a post-graduate course in history."

"What question do *you* have for Mr. Sherman?" asked Lomax.

"I have no question for Mr. Sherman," the South African replied. "But I wish to commend him for his courage in reporting this case of psychic surgery where this man Tony performs operations with his bare hands. *And I would like to say that I, myself, since a boy, have seen our native doctors also doing bare hand operations of a similar nature!*"

"What's that?" cut in Lomax. "You mean to tell us that native doctors in your country are doing the same kind of operations they are doing in the Philippines?"

Guirma smiled and nodded, "Pretty much," he said.

"My dear man," said Lomax, "if this is true, how come the newspapers of the world have not headlined this great event? That's the same question I might ask Mr. Sherman. If these bare-hand operations are true, why hasn't the world heard about them before now?"

Guirma's reply was self-contained but potent: "Your foreign missionaries and medical doctors with your foreign missions have known about these kinds of operations for years—*but apparently they do not consider what our native doctors have been doing of any value to their culture.*"

"Well, that may explain it—I don't know," said Lomax. "As I said before, this is entirely beyond me!"

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A PROVOCATIVE THEORY

THE QUESTIONS INCREASINGLY asked by medical doctors, psychiatrists, physicists, chemistry and electronics engineers, and laymen, as they viewed colour motion pictures of Tony's purported "psychic surgery" were:

"Granted this is true, how does he do it? What energies or forces are involved? What intelligence? From what sources do these come? If Tony actually opens and closes bodies, as he appears to do, how is it possible that he has the intelligence to perform the variety of operations? Within five to ten minutes, he apparently performs operations that would require not only a surgeon but an entire staff of assistants and nurses! And all without requiring anaesthetics or instruments and other ordinary medical facilities! Once more, how is this all possible? And why, apparently, without any pretence of maintaining sanitary conditions, in his person or the surroundings, does no infection seem to develop?"

I was at a loss even to attempt to answer these questions, freely admitting that I was as baffled as anyone else. My job, primarily, was, and is, to report as frankly and truthfully as possible, what I have seen and experienced.

If I have been fooled or deceived in any particular, many good minds, far better equipped scientifically than mine, have been fooled and deceived along with me. But, allowing for a certain amount of detected fraud and deception, too much has now been observed, by too many competent people over too long a time, which cannot be written off as false.

My appearance on the Louis Lomax show brought an

avalanche of mail and phone calls. One came from a woman who identified herself as Mrs. Elsie Levinson of Lawndale, California, who said:

"I am a native Filipino, married to an American. I want to give you proof of 'psychic surgery'. What you told the American people on TV was true. Two years ago, my husband and I visited the Philippines. While there, Malcolm, my husband, became violently ill with severe pains in his stomach. We took him to the hospital in Manila. He was attended by a Chinese doctor, one of the finest. He could not find the cause of my husband's illness, and called in other doctors, but they were unable to diagnose the case. Meanwhile, my husband was in such pain that he was doubled up. They thought perhaps he might die, so my friends and relatives in the Philippines said: 'If the medical doctors are not sure what is wrong, let's take him out of the hospital to one of the "psychic surgeons." There is a man named Ben who is very good.'

"I talked to my husband. I told him what my people wanted to do. He was very sceptical, but his pain was so great he finally decided he would try anything. We took him to the place where Ben was operating. When Ben saw how nervous and distressed my husband was, he let him watch him operate on someone else first. This convinced my husband. He let us put him on the table and Ben examined him. Ben said almost right away, 'Your husband has water in the liver.' I didn't know what this meant, but I found out it was what the doctors call 'liver edema'—fluid in the liver.

"Then Ben put his hands on my husband's body, pressed down and the body opened up, so he could get his fingers in and open the liver. Mr. Sherman, you have seen operations like this, so you will believe. The Chinese doctor was standing right beside me, looking on. He had insisted on being present if we were to be so foolish as to have 'psychic surgery.' *We both saw water squirt out of the liver!* Then Ben closed it up, and closed the body. It healed without a scar. My husband's pain was gone. He got up off the table, and he has been well ever since."

I have this woman's address and telephone number, of course.

She assured me she would furnish more details and specific information to any responsible persons who might wish to check further.

There were other calls and proffered evidence. A friend put me in touch with Bobbie Gironda, of North Hollywood, who had written about an unusual case of an American "psychic surgery" healing in *Fate* magazine of a year and more ago. When I talked to Mrs. Gironda, I learned that she had become so interested in psychic healing that she had contacted as many as eight different Americans who had gone to the Philippines to be operated upon by "psychic surgeons" like Tony. She had met them personally and secured their case histories. I asked her if she could arrange to bring all these people together so I could meet and interview them.

"I'll see what I can do," she promised. It took her several weeks, by which time I had left Los Angeles and continued on my scheduled tour. But, after reaching home at the end of the long cross-country motor trip, when I heard she had all these Americans lined up, with their case histories of "psychic surgery" operations, I took the first plane back to California to see them. This thrilling meeting is the subject of the next chapter.

Let me tell you first, however, of another meeting I had which has contributed much to a possible understanding of this purported phenomenon. I was put in touch with a Swiss scientist of international standing, with doctorates in physics, chemistry, medicine and electronics, who is engaged exclusively in advanced research, and with whom I became friends. He expressed no astonishment after viewing the films of the Agpaoa phenomenon. At my request, he advanced a possible hypothesis which could serve as an explanation for this seemingly unbelievable occurrence.

I have his permission to quote the essence of this possible explanatory hypothesis. Since my friend, who plans to participate in the scientific expedition to the Philippines for the purposes of a carefully planned series of tests and investigations of this phenomenon, has not yet had the opportunity to approach

the matter in a purely scientific manner, I am not, at the present time, permitted to use his name or professional affiliations.

Following our contemplated Philippines expedition, and after the results of the investigation of the participating scientists have been evaluated, there will be an official release of the findings of these scientists, and all publications will be made over their own signatures.

Said the doctor, after viewing a movie showing Tony performing an operation: "I am not at all perplexed by this, in fact I don't think it is such a strange phenomenon. I believe it has a scientific explanation, and, in time, will be done by *instrumentation*. I can offer an explanation which, if it does not silence some of your sceptics and detractors, will at least give them pause for thought."

"This would certainly be helpful," said I. "It's not been an easy assignment to be on this kind of a firing line. However, as a pioneer in the field of psychic phenomena, now called extrasensory perception, I've encountered sceptics and closed minds all my life. What I am going through now is therefore not new. But because of the fantastic nature of this phenomenon, the challenge to medical science and religion that it presents, if proved beyond any scientific doubt, the opposition is understandably rough."

"Yes," said the doctor. "And it will take carefully planned and exhaustive research by top scientists before any real acceptance can be gained. I happened to have known Albert Einstein throughout most of his life. He showed me once the files which contained letters, newspapers, magazines, scientific journals and papers, all bitterly attacking, ridiculing and vilifying him. Of course, before he died, Einstein and his theories received great acclaim. But he was fortunate. Many of the great minds of the past never lived to see their ideas and inventions vindicated."

I was eager to learn what the doctor might be able to present in the way of an explanation which would help substantiate the possible existence of the Agpaoa phenomenon.

"I am not ready at this time to announce this to the scientific world as an accomplished fact," he said. "But it might interest

you to know that I have, in the laboratory, through developed *electromagnetic instrumentation*, been separating and reuniting plant cell structures and animal cell structures from rats and mice."

I took a long minute to let the full significance of this statement sink in.

"You say," I repeated, "let me make sure I heard you right, you have discovered how to separate and to reunite cell structures or tissue by electromagnetic means."

"That is right," he smiled. "It can be done. It is the same magnetic cohesive energy that holds the cells of our bodies together. And if Tony is actually performing this phenomenon, he has to be absorbing, converting and using, in my opinion, this same electromagnetic energy from the terrestrial energy field. If he is doing this, he is not cutting the cellular tissues. He is simply separating them through a form of unipolarisation. Mere separation does not injure the cells as happens with a surgeon's knife. So cells do not have to repair themselves before healing. Once the separated cellular tissue, which has been parted and is in a unipolar state, is released, the opposite magnetic polarities pull them quickly together again, and they fuse and appear exactly as they were before."

"I'm not a scientist," said I, "but even to a layman, it sounds logical."

This was exciting beyond words. The doctor continued: "This presents a vast field for speculation. If it is possible to separate and reunite cell structures in the laboratory, then it seems logical that it can be done in *vivo* (with life and animation), as Tony seems to do it."

"I am afraid you have temporarily lost me," I told him. "I wonder if I can prevail upon you to put down on paper your concepts of what Tony is doing and how he is doing it. In the event that further scientific research proves his absolute genuineness, I would like to be able to quote accurately your scientific ideas and theories because I know they will be of enormous interest to everyone. It is not enough to say that the God-power or Holy Spirit is functioning through Tony. This may be true,

after a fashion, in a religious sense, but the world will demand a more specific explanation, scientific in nature, coupled with the spiritual."

Complying with my request, the doctor prepared the following statement for me to present. He prefaced it with this written comment:

> Important new evidence has come to my attention as a result of an operation on an American which Tony performed, that throws new light on the Agpaoa phenomenon. It serves to confirm my earlier assumptions which, at the time, could not be verified. I refer to the fact, based upon the case history before me, which is supported by an objective medical opinion, even by a medical doctor who is interested in the Agpaoa phenomenon, that we now have the evidence that Antonio Agpaoa can err in his diagnosis and then perform an unsuccessful operation!
>
> This fact, as unpleasant as it might be for the patient, has made the Agpaoa phenomenon far more interesting and valuable to me, since through this fact, this phenomenon in its entirety has now placed itself within the spectrum of known energy and can now quite simply be explained.
>
> The last so-called unusual and baffling element, namely how Tony can make a diagnosis, and *how* his hands seemingly *know* what to do without his having any medical training, has now disappeared. All has now become a perfectly logical, step-by-step progression of characteristics of energies, long known and used by man.
>
> As I have previously stated: *Now the phenomenon has become a miracle, and the miracle has become especially beautiful because it is performed by and through man—that is, by and through the power within man—as Antonio Agpaoa has proved because he erred*!
>
> The reasoning is rather simple. If the Agpaoa phenomenon were based upon or done by divine God-power, by the Holy Spirit, as I understand Tony likes to say, then *every* diagnosis and *every* operation would have to be *perfect*, which Tony apparently believes they are. But, a true God-power would have to be of infinite perfection and without error, and would also have to perform through Tony with the same perfection and without error.

One cannot conceive that a God-power, from an omnipotent creator of all the universe and omnipresent therein, continuously creating and re-creating in His likeness, can err. Even less can one conceive of such an infinitely perfect power amusing itself or, for whatever reason, functioning imperfectly and making an error. Such a concept would be unimaginably stupid. Hence, there is only one conclusion, namely: *The Agpaoa phenomenon is not based upon or created by any God-power in the commonly-used religious sense.*

Herein would lie the exquisite beauty of the reported Agpaoa phenomenon, in that it not only becomes understandable and valuable to all mankind but would glorify *man* as the crowning creation—as *God-man*, made in the likeness of the Creator, endowed with powers not merely to perform in a phenomenal manner as possibly illustrated by Antonio Agpaoa and others like him.

DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE AGPAOA PHENOMENON

Phase one:	The diagnosis
Phase two:	The opening of the body
Phase three:	The operation proper
Phase four:	The closing of the body

Note: Phase one, or diagnosis, subdivides itself into several separate sub-phases, such as:

(A) Determination if a disease is present;
(B) Determination of the disease status, operative or inoperative.

Phases two to four, inclusive, must also include infection prevention. It is said that no infection-caused complications have ever been observed from Tony's operations. Tony is twenty-seven years old today. It is said also that he has performed surgery since he was nine years old, at a rate of several a day.

On the assumption that the Agpaoa phenomenon is true, in order to understand how it could be possible, the reader must be made familiar with some facts not so widely known by the layman but a matter of greatest interest to biologists and physiologists. *These facts are that the human body produces electro-*

magnetic energy, that it operates (lives) because of and through electromagnetic energy, that it can and does absorb electromagnetic energy from outside sources and that there is a distinct change in this electromagnetic energy pattern when one is ill.

Let us remember that between healthy and diseased tissue, between illness and health, there is a distinct change in bioelectricity. This change can be measured with the appropriate instrumentation. Tony seemingly has in his body's nervous system a sensitive measuring instrument. By determining the disharmony of frequencies, or many other changes which can be detected, as we later will see, Tony could make a diagnosis.

The source of his apparent power, the energy source which, when involved, could produce the force by which he performs is, as I will also try to show later on, not the Holy Spirit, a supernatural force or unknown mystic power, but simply the environmental electromagnetic field, which surrounds us all.

Everything on this planet draws energy therefrom. The mineral kingdom, the plants, animals and man are alive because of this. The crystals grow in their prescribed most marvellous patterns, the plants develop their characteristics, the animals live through their sphere of conscious life, as man does through his, because of, and through, these energy fields. They represent the always available pool of energy from which man draws, each in his way, and from which each receives that, and only that, which he attracts, or should we say, which he deserves.

As experiments have clearly shown, it is possible to attract considerably more energy than the average through the simple expedient of training and application. However, there are people, who, by nature, have been equipped with certain biological and also physical anomalies or differences compared with "normal" people. These differences or anomalies then allow them to attract, convert and use the same energy which everyone in some measure attracts in order to live, but quantitatively in a far greater amount. These people are the ones who, as we say, "have a gift from nature" permitting them to perform in a certain manner.

I would say, from the reports I have received, that Antonio Agpaoa appears to be an outstanding example of such a man, gifted by nature.

Tony says the God-power functions through him. If he uses

the expression God-power as a synonym for creative power, to that which was "at the beginning of the beginning," then he is perfectly correct, since everything in existence represents this power, is made of it, and exists through it. But this same power, call it God-power, if you wish, also operates the telephone, lights the electric bulbs, propels the rockets, gives life or kills. It is not a power *who* is, but a power *which* is, always was, is now, and always will be! It is free for the taking by him who bothers to find out *how*; it is man's birthright.

PHENOMENA SIMILAR TO THAT ASCRIBED TO ANTONIO AGPAOA

The following will give you a brief outline of the main aspects upon which this hypothesis regarding the Agpaoa phenomenon is based.

Having had the opportunity for many years of studying men capable of performing similar phenomena, I feel justified in stating, with a degree of authority, that after the completion of the scheduled tests in the Philippines, I expect to be able to substantiate this hypothesis.

Introductory to this brief presentation of the above-mentioned hypothesis, it should be understood that:

(a) I prefer, in the following discussion, *not* to use the term "psychic surgery" which, in my opinion, is a misnomer and does not make sense.

(b) I prefer *not* to refer to the Antonio Agpaoa phenomenon as God-power, power of the Holy Spirit, etc. (in spite of the fact that in a specific, relative sense, such expressions are correct) simply because these expressions can create misleading and false concepts. The reason for this is that, without specific definitions, such expressions are too vague and have too many connotative interpretations.

(c) I shall refer to Tony's capability *in toto*, as has been reported to us, simply as "the Agpaoa phenomenon." I realise, of course, that Antonio Agpaoa is also widely known as Tony.

(d) I shall *not* refer in the following to so-called "supernatural power," "unknown force," "mystic," "cosmic," "psychic" or "spiritual power or force," since as we will see, later on, such references would be contradictory to logical deduction from

premises based upon observed facts and, therefore, meaningless and invalid. I wish, however, to make it clear, and most emphatically so, that this should *not* be interpreted by the reader to mean that I basically negate the existence of energies and/or forces, not yet known (even though perhaps suspected) or fully understood by man. Nor should it be interpreted to mean that I summarily affirm the existence of such energies and forces as have frequently been seemingly observed and described with much secretive "embellishment" by *unqualified* observers.

(e) It is to be known also that I am well aware of the fact that in the Philippines, as in other places, there are many fakes and swindlers who, with the ability of accomplished magicians, and astonishing sleight-of-hand capability, perform their tricks so that detection becomes quite difficult even for the serious investigator. We must also include among these persons of questionable integrity, those "investigators" who have made up their minds before proper observation, those "investigators" who slant their material for the purpose of making money through so-called "exposés," and those who for personal glorification, even though they are incompetent and unqualified for any form of scientific investigation, fall prey to the first swindler who they observe, and, after having the truth revealed to them, tend to cover their own stupidity by labelling everything they do not understand as "trickery."

Finally, in order to qualify our motive, it should be pointed out that it is not our intention to discredit Antonio Agpaoa or the Agpaoa phenomenon, but solely to determine the full scope of the truth and all the possible scientific applications of this phenomenon to science in general, and to medicine in particular, for the benefit of all mankind.

(f) And for a last qualification of our basic belief, we would like to state that we do *not* agree with people who are of the opinion that in order to do justice to something outstanding and extraordinary, it must be labelled "supernatural," "psychic" or some other equally meaningless name. We differ fundamentally with such childish attitudes, usually propagated by people who pretend knowledge they do not have and hence, quite logically, must conceal this ignorance behind the "psychic and supernatural."

It is an equally deep-rooted belief of ours that miracles are

made of explained phenomena and not of mysterious mumbo-jumbo. It is furthermore our belief that a miracle becomes especially and extraordinarily beautiful when it can be shown that man, as the microcosmic sum total of all the macrocosmos, has within himself the capability of performing this miracle without the help of spirits, mysterious psychic forces, supernatural powers or ascended masters, etc. These various and sundry "higher powers" are all too often usually products of a vivid imagination by people who may be basically honest, but far too much imbued with creating a nimbus of personal greatness and of knowledge they do not possess, to realise that they are destroying the very faculties they desire.

EXPLANATORY NOTES: THE AGPAOA PHENOMENON

PHASE ONE: DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS

Each operator seems to have his own way of differentiation between healthy and diseased tissue; for example, one operator might feel the difference consciously and recognise it, while another operator senses the difference unconsciously, or even subconsciously, reacting then, one could say, automatically, or by impulse.

The type of sense impression itself varies also with each operator. One might sense the difference between healthy and diseased tissue as a temperature difference; another might register the same as a tingling sensation, changing in intensity in proportion to the severity of the disease; and another might register a frequency change, while still others might feel the difference of attraction and repulsion, or even in very rare cases, have certain colour sensations. The colour might even change according to frequency changes (Kelvin colour temp.). We have found operators who claim to have developed a capability of translating the frequency changes of a diseased organ within the body into audio frequencies, i.e., into frequencies audible to them, even though they could not be registered by an electronic instrument for audio pick-up.

In one of these ways, operators like Tony appear to determine if there is a disorder in the patient's body, the type of disorder,

the site of disorder, and the severity of disorder, as well as the general condition and response of the patient, which then allows the operator to decide if surgery should be performed.

(It is to be noted that reputable "operators," like Tony, do refuse those whose condition appears "inoperable.")

Since, however, the human system is used as the instrument to sense, to register, and to interpret the registered sensing, it becomes perfectly logical *that each and any operator is subject to error, occasionally.*

(As the Roman philosophers said, *errare humanum est*, "to err is human.")

If the statistical information made available to me is correct, it is most remarkable how unusually accurate and reliable a diagnostic machine the human system can become. This is evidenced by the fact that, with an outstanding operator, according to reports, the statistical ratio between error and success is so small as to be negligible. One must not forget that even "classic medicine" is subject to error, since it is based on the judgment of the individual physician who makes the decision and this is subject to the mathematically determinable probability of error.

For example, in prescribing certain drugs, the physician must consider the "calculated risk," i.e., he must decide which is more beneficial or detrimental, the drug or the disease, then take the calculated risk and prescribe.

This very brief, very general and sketchy non-technical introduction must, for the time being, suffice as a basis or background for the reader not familiar with such matters, since it is impossible within the frame of this short presentation to enter into any details.

PHASE TWO: THE OPENING OF THE HUMAN BODY

In order to understand this phase, we must first be, at least in basic concept, familiar with the construction of the human body and the cell geometry (which, by the way, is identical to the construction of all matter in the universe, organic and, to some extent, also inorganic, justifying the expression, that man is "The microscopic sum total of the macrocosmos.")

We must visualise that our body consists of billions of atoms which form multi-millions of individual cells, held together, properly spaced from each other and in proper place, by an invisible force, called electromagnetic flux. The cells are surrounded by microscopically-small spaces, the interstitial spaces, forming a complex labyrinth of channels, through which the body disposes of cell waste products, remnants of dead cells, and also through which the cell food and building materials for the new cells to be born are transported. A healthy system produces just the proper amount of electromagnetic force to maintain this accurate relationship between cells with respect to distance, and also with respect to the proper polarities, i.e., polarity relation.

The reader will certainly remember that unequal polarities attract each other and equal polarities repel each other. It follows then that the cells in the human body, *in order to attract each other*, are arranged in patterns of such geometry as to provide in all directions unequal polar forces which act upon each other. Because of this, the cells stay together and form what we believe to be a rather solid structure of bones and tissue, called our body.

When Tony appears, through his *right* hand, to impress upon the tissue of a patient such a force as to change this unequal polarity, i.e., to unipolarise the tissue cells, then the now equal polar cells beneath his *right* hand would have to repel each other and separate, providing an opening, through the skin, muscles, etc. As long as a unipolar state (the equal polarisation) could be maintained, the opening would remain open. The techniques of maintaining a unipolar state are many, and to go into this matter would lead us too far beyond the frame of this short presentation.

If such a separation of tissue cells is difficult to visualise, I suggest the reader should remember that the human body, which appears to him to be quite firm and solid, is, in reality, a very loosely arranged atomic structure, consisting mostly of "empty" spaces. The reader may, in comparison, think of steel, a substance considerably harder and denser than human tissue. Yet, if we could remove all the empty spaces from between the atoms of a rod of steel, one inch by one inch square and approximately three thousand miles long, roughly extending from

Los Angeles to New York, we would end up with only a thin disk, one by one inch square and perhaps the thickness of two paper matchbooks. This thin disk would still weigh practically as much as the original rail and would contain all the atoms, all the so-called *solid material*, which formed the 3000 mile long solid steel rod!

Is it then so difficult to visualise a separation of cells in human tissues, since tissue, being so much softer than steel, contains also many more empty spaces and many fewer atoms (solid matter)?

PHASE THREE: THE OPERATION PROPER

This should be quite self-explanatory. When the hand or hands seemingly enter through the opening, then, by the same method as the diagnosis, the operator "senses" the diseased tissue, etc., and by the same method as the opening appears to have been made, removes the diseased tissue, etc. The basic "mechanics" in both instances are identical. Because of this I shall not repeat it again.

PHASE FOUR: THE CLOSING OF THE BODY

By removing the "keeper" or "keeper force" which appears to differ with each operator, according to his method, or by applying a corresponding force, the unipolarisation could again be changed into the normal polarisation and the electromagnetic forces of attraction would take over once more. As a result thereof, the cells would become again the subject of the original attraction and would automatically re-establish the original pattern geometry and cell structure, and as a result, the *opening* would *close spontaneously*.

Note: If this hypothesis is applicable, then there would be certain operations on specific cysts, tumours, etc., where the cells would *not* close spontaneously, where the closure would take twelve, twenty-four or more hours, because of the original disarray of cell polarity caused by the specific nature of certain cysts, tumours, etc. Various operators, including Tony, indicate that in certain cases they use gauze and adhesive tape to cover a slow closing opening, which exudes fluids for a short while.

Natural restoration of cell polarity of an incision constitutes this normal healing process after surgery. Even under "normal" conditions, the time for a wound to close varies, depending on the polarising energy of the patient.

PREVENTION OF INFECTION

It is now only left to determine the mode by which, in spite of the obvious lack of sterile conditions during the surgery, infections appear to be prevented.

The obvious answer is that viri and bacilli must be rendered either non-virulent or else destroyed. From the many hypothetically-possible ways, the one most likely is the simplest one, that nature, which always selects the way of least resistance, would prefer.

Thus it would seem that in Tony's nervous system there could exist a potential of such a frequency set-up that viri and bacilli are bent so violently and at such an amplitude that the *modulus of elasticity* could be over-stepped and either the protein linkage of viri or the membrane of vacilli shattered, rendering them ineffective. Since the penetration of an electric potential is not limited by "hard to get to" places, a uniform and complete *aseptic state* could be produced.

Thus we have presented hypothetically, step by step, a procedure such as, for example, an individual possessing the purported ability of an Antonio Agpaoa could follow, in making a diagnosis, opening the body, performing an operation, and then closing the body—all under perfectly aseptic conditions in spite of the fact that no so-called conventional sterile conditions are maintained.

The only forces which have been used to explain the entire procedure have been such as are well known to man and are within the already known electro-magnetic spectrum.

IT FOLLOWS THEN, THAT A PHENOMENON LIKE THAT ASCRIBED TO ANTONIO AGPAOA, MAY BE EXPLAINED *IN TOTO*, WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OR OTHER SUPERNATURAL POWERS, MYSTIC FORCES OR OTHER ABRACADABRA.

It is intriguing to me to see that man, when he wants to

make himself or a certain happening seem especially important, resorts to the invoking of supernatural forces, not known to man, not realising that, in doing so, he degrades himself, because he disclaims the fact that man can produce extraordinary powers out of himself. By such childish actions, man shows that he does not know that man's scope is unlimited if man does not limit himself.

The exquisite beauty and tremendous value of the Agpaoa phenomenon would lie in the fact that *man could perform it by and out of himself.* Therein lies the stimulus and the directive for man to create an instrument to duplicate such a phenomenon and make it available to surgeons all over the world who would then be able to perform surgery not by slicing through tissue cells but by *separating* them. It would shorten or eliminate the lengthy recuperative period, eliminate or reduce post-operative shock, and remove the danger period of infection.

THE POSSIBILITIES, IF TRUE

The basis for progress in science and technology is open-mindedness, objectivity, and a fearless pursuit of knowledge through research. Not only are these attitudes essential to science, but they are the ultimate in the duty of science towards man.

Provided that the information that has been given us is accurate, provided that Antonio Agpaoa is an honest man who does not resort to trickery of any kind, and that he can actually perform the phenomenon ascribed to him, then we would be justified in assuming that there should be a scientific explanation for this phenomenon. This scientific explanation is what interests us, and this is what should interest any ethical and sincere scientist in spite of the unpleasant situations created by publicity-seeking and sensation-seeking individuals.

A scientific investigation by properly trained and ethical scientists negating this phenomenon would once and for all terminate further discussion, while a confirmation in the affirmative by such a group would be the basis for a truly momentous breakthrough in medicine, space sciences, and science as a whole.

A WORD OF TRIBUTE

In closing this commentary, we would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to a man who has contributed more than most people toward scientific acceptance of ESP and other equally phenomenal faculties of the human mind, Harold Sherman.

We admire Mr. Sherman for his many talents, and especially for his unusually excellent personal control, but we would like to pay tribute to him also for the outstanding unselfish and objective manner in which he has conducted years of research in a critical and most controversial field, that of ESP, and of other phenomena of the mind. He has demonstrated the highest degree of responsibility toward scientific accuracy, searching and recording the truth as he saw it, accurately and without prejudice.

I hope, as many of my colleagues do, that Mr. Sherman and an elite group of men like him will continue their efforts to raise the study of the phenomena of the human mind to its rightful place, as an ethical science, one of a most fundamental character, because it encompasses such fantastic scope from the question of "being" to the lofty regions of life itself, of time and space.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

CASE HISTORIES OF AMERICAN PATIENTS

THERE IS AN OLD, old saying that goes back past the time when I was a boy, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

You weren't supposed to be concerned about the ingredients, how they were mixed, or whether or not they were boiled or baked. But if the pudding itself—the finished product—was all that one might expect, that was ample, unquestioned proof that it was all right. Any criticising of the recipe, the methods used to create this appetising concoction, were accessories after the fact. Who could argue with an acceptable, satisfying result?

Using this as an illustration, you might say the same of "psychic surgery." The proof was in the result achieved. It is easy to criticise the techniques these "psychic surgeons" use as "crude, primitive, unsanitary and unsafe." But what are we going to say if the patients claim a restoration of good health and a recovery from their ailments? What *can* we say, if we can remain fair and unbiased, except, "We just can't understand it, but we'll have to admit, *the proof is in the pudding!*"

In the United States there was one woman who went after this proof. Her name: Mrs. Bobbie Gironda, of North Hollywood, California. When she heard of Americans in her vicinity who had gone to the Philippines for "psychic surgery" operations and had returned with apparent healings, she made it her business to meet them and get their stories. But Bobbie did not stop at this. She went after their medical records and endeavoured, in a systematic way, to secure their full case histories, and to follow up the extent of their recovery.

The circumstances that led to my being put in touch with her were providential. During my time in the Philippines I had been told of different Americans who had visited the islands and sought out different spirit mediums for healings of various physical afflictions. But how to locate and contact them was a problem. I realised, at once, that first-hand reports of people from the United States who had been actual patients would mean much more to fellow-Americans and those in other countries than accounts of operations performed on native Filipinos. With the language barrier and the popular concept that those who live in the Philippines are, for the most part, uneducated, ignorant and superstitious, sceptics were not too apt to accept their claims of physical healings.

Now, however, through the great kindness and co-operation of Bobbie Gironda, I was to have assembled for me, in my Hollywood apartment, actual American patients and their relatives who had been to the Philippines within the past year, or even as short a time as a month ago; to have opportunity to hear their stories direct from them; to see photographs they had taken of the operations, and to get their medical records.

The day of this unusual event was Sunday, May 22. Present, among others, were Mrs. Donna Morel, age 33, of Sun Valley, California, and son, Danny Guin, age nine (by a former husband); her mother, Mrs. Clifford Jensen, age 58, Burbank, California; Mrs. Katherine Swope, age 67, Pomona, California; Ann McPhie, age 33, and daughter, Teru McPhie, age nine, Sepulveda, California.

All of the above named had been to the Philippines and been operated upon for one cause or another. I interviewed each one and made tape-recordings of their answers to my questions, as well as their accounts of what had happeneded in their individual cases.

Bobbie Gironda brought me typed reports of their medical records and histories in further substantiation. But I am sure it is the human as well as the factual story that needs to be presented. Bobbie, in the remarkable case of the Morels, mother and son, and Danny's grandmother, Mrs. Jensen, has

written a superb account of her own which she has granted permission for me to publish as a part of the thrilling documentation.

What motivates a person to go half-way around the globe to participate in healings our more civilised era would term witchcraft and illusion? For Danny Guin, at age nine, the decision was based on desperation. Four years of pain, medical consultations, operations and tests had ultimately shown Danny that he wasn't getting well. He also saw it by degrees of change in his mother's face. Her smiling reassurance to him at the initial examination had faded now to a carefully maintained mask of reserve.

But Danny detected fresh hope when his mother, Donna Morel, told him of the strange doctors in the Philippines. He grabbed at the chance to be free of his enemy, his own crippled leg, which had far too long prevented him the expression of his own body. Danny didn't ask about the mechanics of the surgery or if it might be painful. His only questions were: "Can I leave my crutches down there? Would it be okay to burn them?"

Donna's husband was a practical man, his profession a fundamental one. He might have refused his wife this trip were it not for his chance meeting with stigmatist Therese Neumann in Germany during World War II. After witnessing the appearance of the bleeding wounds on Miss Neumann's body, he realised there were happenings in the world he was unable to define. And so he left the decision about Manila entirely in his wife's hands.

Donna Morel was grasping, as they say, at straws. It was a gamble, one that would deplete all the reserve money destined for her son's college education, and certainly she knew she would be ridiculed by friends and family. But not only did Donna feel that any possibility which might cure her son was worth investigating, her searching mind was on fire with curiosity. In her own words, "I could never have rested until I found out if it was true or not.

This is her story as it happened, and as she told it:

It was a tense moment when Eleuterio Terte came down the

stairs. We were at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Guillermo Tolentino, in Manila. It was a Wednesday afternoon of April 13, 1966. The room was sweltering with humidity equalling the temperature. I felt the perspiration break out afresh, adding still more moisture to my damp clothes.

Terte's eyes looked carefully at each of the twenty faces present in the sculptor's living room. Then they stopped at my son. He looked at me and motioned us forward. Frightened, I shook my head negatively. I wasn't about to send Danny up to that makeshift operating table until I saw what might happen to some others. I had reasoned this well might all be accomplished through mass hypnotism. I wasn't going to get close enough to be subjected to it. Danny had been watching me carefully from across the room, where he had been inspecting everything. His face showed relief at my refusal of Terte's invitation.

A heavy, elderly Filipino woman climbed on the table. Mrs. Tolentino translated that she had gallstones. I stayed well back, my scepticism vying with the worry that I might become ill at whatever would take place. All I could see was Terte's hands press into her abdomen. Seconds later, he held up an object looking like a greenish-brown rock. Startled, with my mind reeling, I glanced at my mother, Mrs. Jensen, whose face wore a similar look of disbelief.

Mrs. Tolentino said: "The woman has another stone, but Terte said she is not strong enough to operate now. She must come back."

I fought the impulse to move closer as a small Filipino child was placed on the table. The growth on her eye was obvious even from where I stood. The surgeon placed his hands on her eye, shook his head and Mrs. Tolentino again helpfully translated. "He refuses to operate until the girl is two years old because her eyes are still developing."

There was only a moment to reflect that this seemed a reasonable explanation when an American woman (permission not yet granted to use her name) climbed on to the table and my curiosity overcame my fears. I grabbed my camera and moved closer, my mother following me. When asked if she knew her problem, she answered, "Yes, I have ulcers."

"That's the simplest of all," Terte answered.

The sheet was drawn up carefully before the patient's dress was raised. I approved their extra consideration given for American modesty. Then Terte's brown hands sank directly into her abdomen. It looked like he was merely pushing her stomach down into a crease and moving his fingers around.

Suddenly blood showed round the side of his hands. I felt the thrill of excitement surge through me as I snapped the camera shutter. This was real because I was seeing it! Leaving his left hand pressed well into the abdomen, his right hand held up a small, jagged piece of light red flesh. He dropped the piece into an extended jar held for him. Four times more, his right hand dipped into the abdomen. Each time a similar mass was removed.

Then Terte was through, wiping away with cotton the few drops of blood remaining on the area. Before my amazed eyes, I saw her stomach bearing not a trace of a mark or a line of incision to indicate that, mere seconds ago, the surgeon's hands had been inside her!

Mother fell back as if to faint, looking dazed and confused. I guided her quickly to a chair and started fanning her. Over and over again, she kept repeating, "I can't believe it, I can't believe it!"

Neither could I, but now my attention went to the American woman who was helped to her feet. She stared at the traces of blood on the hem of her dress, unable to accept that it might be hers. Throughout the entire psychic surgery, her placid face had revealed no pain or discomfort.

I asked her how she felt. "I feel fine, just a little shaky. Did you see the things he took out of me? Did you see them?"

Our conversation stopped abruptly as Terte motioned for Danny to come to him. Tears filled my boy's eyes. He kept backing away until he was pushing hard against me, as if the reassurance of my body could somehow create an impenetrable wall through which no one could enter.

I tried to keep my voice level: "I'm not going to force you, Danny. You'll go when you're ready. Just remember, this is what we came for."

My courage was measured not by volume, then, but by every bit I could find hiding within me. This moment froze in time

and is one I shall never forget as I watched my son, with the aid of his crutches, limp slowly toward the surgeon.

Dan was silent, now, his face registering no panic as they helped him on the table. I was experiencing a multitude of mixed emotions. But one thing was clear. If Danny began to look afraid or cried out, I knew I would grab him off that table and start running!

The girl assisting Terte asked me what was wrong with my son. Even as I pointed to my own leg and told her of the bone tumour that kept reappearing, Terte's hand was already gently touching the exact spot on his patient's leg.

As the psychic surgeon began taking Danny's slacks off, my son grabbed fast to his underwear and held on for dear life. Terte manipulated the leg gently, examining front and back, and then said, "This is too serious, he needs magnetic healing for strength before I can operate."

This reassured me, partly the relief that the operation was postponed, but mostly the fact that this dark man somehow knew Danny's condition was as grave as we did. Whether a pantomime or use of another dimension beyond our awareness, Terte reached into a nearby open Bible and held an invisible hypodermic syringe. Danny was apparently given a shot, on the back of his left knee and on the arch of his left foot. To this, my son commented that he had felt a prickly sensation.

As they helped Dan off the table, handing him his crutches, we were told to follow Terte to the province of Baguio, the following day, so the treatment or surgery could take place. But it seems the fates had other plans for us. Mrs. Tolentino announced that the psychic surgeon, Blanche, would be operating that evening at her home. Even though it gave us scant hours to dine and change, I knew we would return that night. We had come to see all we could.

At six p.m. we were at the Tolentinos, bringing along our Filipino housegirl, Ebafania—Fanny, to us. Her eyes had widened with each thing we related over dinner about the Spiritist doctor Terte. Although living in the same city where miracles were occurring, and even aware of the many rumours talked about among the peasants, her amazement and curiosity were as great as ours.

Blanche and his two assistants came smiling down the stairs

moments after our arrival. Everything about this man seemed to give me an inner calm. Even without a word exchanged, Blanche's bearing and open friendliness bolstered my confidence. He walked right to Danny and put one hand on my son's head as the other felt his crippled leg. I went numb as Blanche nodded his head. An assistant translated: "He's satisfied the boy is strong enough now. He will operate."

Danny, with that quick adjustment of the youthful mind to adapt to any foreign circumstance, showed only irritation at another examination and at having to remove his trousers again. They placed him stomach down on the table, his head resting on his arms. My eyes began their staccato dance back and forth from Danny's face to Blanche's hands.

The psychic surgeon asked his helper for a coin and was handed a copper-coloured twenty-five centavo piece. This was placed on the back of Danny's upper leg, near the spot of the tumour. A piece of oil-soaked cotton was then put on top of the coin. I gasped as Blanche lit a match and set fire to the cotton. My son was looking bored, gazing off into space as if waiting for something to happen. I couldn't believe the heat conducted into that circle of metal from the blaze would go unnoticed.

"Is it burning you?" I asked, quietly.

"Is what burning me?" he replied.

"Nothing, never mind," I answered, mystified by the whole thing.

Blanche took a small tumbler, the size of a shot glass, and placed it over the coin. The fire went out instantly. As he took his finger and tapped on the top of the glass, fresh blood appeared on the skin surface, following the outline of the glass. I peered very closely, as did my mother. But when this apparatus was removed, there was no cut or opening on the skin to indicate where the blood was flowing from. Neither was there a mark or redness from the heat.

Blanche reached for my mother's right hand and doubled it into a fist, leaving her forefinger extended. *Holding her hand within his, directly over the centre of that circle of blood, he made a quick, cutting motion. Instantly, a pink slash appeared in the skin, some eight inches beneath her forefinger—about one-and-a-half inches in length*!

"My finger did *that*!" Mother gasped, but I barely heard her.

Every nerve and muscle in my body was focused on Blanche's movements. He was placing the tips of his fingers on the bloody circle and drawing them together toward the centre of the cut. I saw something coming out of the incision. With his forefinger and thumb, he reached into the opening and partially withdrew a piece of hard-looking tissue. Blanche halted abruptly as the mass was three-quarters out and turned to look at me, as if to say: "Do you believe it now? I'm waiting for you. Go on, take a picture!"

After my flash bulb exploded, Blanche pulled the remainder of the tissue out. He held it up for me to take another picture before dropping it into a nearby waste basket. Whatever came out of my son's leg was now mingled with other unidentified objects and bloodstained pieces of cotton. As he wiped the traces of blood from Danny's leg, I held my breath. This was that unbelievable moment when no break or mark would remain on the skin to indicate the surgery of seconds before.

To my surprise, Blanche merely pinched the skin together, leaving the gash that would take two weeks to heal naturally.

"But why doesn't he close it?" I asked the assistant.

"There is too much doubt you have," came the reply. "Now this will be your proof."

On the way home, I asked Dan what he had felt. He murmured tiredly that his leg was stinging a little, but it hadn't hurt. Then he turned to look out of the window as if to find the quiet to search out his own thoughts.

Mother kept trying to talk herself into the fact that she hadn't dreamed it all. The housegirl, Fanny, still wore eyes as big as dinner plates. I knew Fanny was plagued with an allergy that manifested in a severe red rash on her upper body unless she took daily medication. I decided to invite her to come with us the following day to the province of Rizal where Blanche was operating. Perhaps my encouraging her was only to see what might happen in her particular case. I needed to see much more for proof.

Early the following morning of Thursday, April 14, we drove to a primitive, two-storey home in a province about an hour from Manila. There, Blanche attended patients unable to journey to the city.

We were welcomed immediately and shown to a separate

small room containing only a table. There was barely enough space to squeeze by it. The room had no windows. Even at an early hour, the heat was suffocating. I couldn't help making a mental comparison between the extremes of surgical procedure in the United States and this foreign land. My scepticism had revived with a good night's sleep and I wasn't going to miss a thing.

Fanny shyly approached the table. Blanche, after a cursory examination, began picking little seed-like objects from her arms, face and neck. I had been busying myself getting the camera loaded, but the sound of the things plinking into a bowl partly filled with water caught my attention. At my hard look at the bowl, the helper held it out to me for closer inspection.

"He's got to be a magician!" I thought to myself. "It's the hand quicker than the eye. Where else could these things be coming from?"

The instant my thought was completed, I felt Blanche's eyes on me. He was grinning broadly, as if he had heard my thoughts aloud. Then he spread his hands wide, slowly turning them over, back and front. I was so embarrassed, I wished the floor would open up and let me drop out of sight. But I'd gone this far and wasn't backing out now. Since my scepticism was already in plain sight, I was going to satisfy it.

Blanche's helper snickered aloud. The psychic surgeon kept grinning pleasantly as he watched my face stop blushing and determination take its place. I looked Blanche up and down, all sides too, carefully checking for any hidden gimmicks which might contain a reservoir of these magical seeds. His hands and arms were bare and the short-sleeved cotton shirt he wore was too damp to offer any concealment.

I put my nose within four inches of Fanny's arm. Blanche obligingly, and in slow motion, pressed two fingers on either side of a skin pore. The tip of another seed began emerging. His hands were visible at all times and since we were standing hip to hip in that cubbyhole, I felt satisfied no tricks were underway.

Blanche paused for my benefit as the seed was half-out, and again, at the three-quarter mark. These things, well over fifty removed, resembled what I would imagine long grain rice with husks would look like. The amazing thing was that they were

much larger than the pore from which they were taken. Blanche then simply grasped the seed, with the tips of his fingers, and picked it out of the skin. The plinking sound of that particular rice-like seedling hitting the water terminated my doubts. By whatever powers this man and the other Spiritist surgeons were operating under, they were a reality, whether my limited references could explain it to me or not.

No matter how many of the astounding psychic surgeries I witnessed could be related, there is really only one way for you to believe. Go and see with your own eyes. Perhaps, like myself, when your mind finally has to accept the truth of it, you will take another step forward and ask "How" and "Why?"

This was Mrs. Morel's story as told to Bobbie Gironda and reported by her. It was essentially the same story Mrs. Morel personally told to me. And her mother, Mrs. Clifford Jensen, also confirmed everything to me, *especially Blanche's taking her hand in his, pointing her right forefinger at her grandson's left hip, some eight inches above it, and causing the flesh to open up to the extent of an inch and a half, in which opening Blanche then performed an operation for removal of blood clots.*

What would you think if you heard such testimony from the lips of the principals themselves? These American patients of Filipino psychic surgeons had come, some of them quite long distances and at considerable inconvenience, to present to me their evidence, so that I, in turn, could tell others that there was, indeed, substantial truth to the reports of faith and spirit healings coming out of the Philippines.

On this May 22, just five weeks after Danny's last healing treatment in the Philippines, April 17, he walked into my apartments, with his mother and grandmother, *without crutches*, a handsome, happy young boy.

The description of his physical condition and his medical history prior to his going to the Philippines was furnished me by Bobbie Gironda, who had secured it from Danny's physician's files:

Non-osteogenic fibroma of the left femoral neck. Cause unknown but possibly from birth or injury causing circulatory

blockage, resulting in improper feeding of the bone by the artery.

Illness noted in May, 1962, manifesting in pain, limp, irritability, fatigue and loss of weight. Biopsy and curettage of cystic lesion performed December 29, 1964, and again on March 18, 1965. Fibroma reappeared. Danny was put on crutches and restricted from sports and running as of November, 1965.

SPIRITIST SURGERY

(Photos taken of each step throughout)

Danny was seen by Terte, Wednesday, April 13, 1966. He performed magnetic healing and asked that the boy be taken to Baguio for further treatment following day.

Wednesday evening of same day, surgery performed on leg by Blanche, as described. Tissue was removed, and Blanche commented that this was causing trouble. Tissue was not saved for purposes of identification. Blanche's assistant employed chiropractic methods on Danny's leg.

Thursday, April 14—Blanche operated on hip, again using coin, cotton and glass before making an incision. Object resembling blood clot was removed. (See lab report.) Incisions were not closed. Wounds were pinched together and allowed to heal naturally.

Friday, April 15—third surgery by Blanche through first incision on leg.

Sunday, April 17, massage and magnetic healing performed by Ading, a trainee healer, to restore correct position of the femur head into the hip socket.

OBSERVATIONS

(upon return to States)

Danny is completely off crutches and partially able to participate in normal physical activities. Over-exertion, however, still produces nerve pain but to a lesser degree than before. Limp is gradually disappearing.

Danny's doctor expressed satisfaction at his condition. An X-ray, taken the same day (April 26) fibroma still apparently in evidence, but this was not judged conclusively as the X-ray

was improperly taken from an incorrect angle. Lab report of specimens, taken from leg, indicates two blood clots and striated skeletal muscle with no malignancy present. (See footnote.) At that date, not sufficient time to draw conclusive evidence of total healing, but all observations point to improved condition.

Beginning Monday, May 23 (the day after Danny met me in Hollywood) he was taken off therapy at the special school he attends, required, thereafter, only to do home prescribed exercises.

Footnote: While three specimens were removed from Danny's leg in the Philippines, only two were preserved for later lab analysis. Either due to the motion en route to the United States, or possibly the over-fixation of these tissues, it appears the blood clot separated into two fragments, thus accounting for the extra clot.

LATER REPORT

(As of June 24, 1966)

Danny has appointment with doctor. X-rays show conclusively that there is no trace of a tumour! The withered leg muscles are restored and in proportion to the normal right leg. His former limp is not visible. The overgrown femur head is still not fitted properly into the hip socket, but this will balance with the boy's normal growth. Doctor said he would like to see Danny again in September for a final check-up, but he can plan to attend regular school in the fall. (Dr. M. R. Johnstone's exact written statement: "Tumour much improved on X-ray and is asymptomatic. Plan regular school in fall.")

Request date 5/10/66

Patient: Danny Guin
Specimen: Tissue from 1. femur area.
Gross examination:

The specimen is submitted in a yellow solution having a strong acetic odour. It consists of three irregular fragments of tissue. These range from 1.0 x 0.8 x 0.2 to 2.3 x 1.2 x 1.0 cms. The two smaller fragments are smoothly surfaced, the largest is irregularly surfaced or grooved. All are olive green. Sectioning

of the largest fragment reveals a bright yellow-green, faintly fibrillary, cut surface. The entire specimen is used for microscopic interpretation.

Microscopic description:

The two smaller fragments are comprised of blood clot; the largest consists of skeletal tissue. The striae are well preserved. There is some fragmentation of the bundles, but this is interpreted as secondary to the brittleness of the specimen which in turn is due to the fixation, the specimen being overfixed. There is no exudation nor is there any margination. No criteria of malignancy are observed.

Diagnosis:

1. Striated muscle
2. Blood clot

(Signed) WILLIAM N. PARNASSUS, M.D.
Pathologist

Impressed by the apparent success of the operations on her son, Donna Morel decided to have Spiritist healers treat as well as operate on two of her own physical difficulties. For the past sixteen years she had suffered from otitis media and externa (fungus) present in both ears, which had caused severe itching. In continued attempts to find a cure she had gone to many doctors, spent considerable money and tried many prescribed and administered treatments, all without success.

On April 14, 1966, Blanche placed cotton on the tip of a burned match and swabbed one ear. The second ear was treated in a similar manner by Blanche the next day.

The itching stopped completely for several weeks, then partially resumed in the left ear only, to a lesser degree than before. As of July 16, there has been no itching present for one week. Mrs. Morel thinks this might be indicative of a complete cure.

Mrs. Morel's other physical difficulty had to do with a prolapsed uterus. Another Spiritist healer, Della Perez, massaged the uterus into correct position, on April 16. She was a follower of the psychic surgeon, Ading.

The uterus stayed in correct position for approximately two weeks, then again prolapsed. The presumption, at the time, was that the healing, performed by a beginner, may have had no lasting value. However, as of recent date, Mrs. Morel has reported that the customary seven-day menstrual spotting prior to period has ended and that the uterus seems to be restored to a proper position. It is therefore possible, she believes, that a complete healing has occurred.

It was evident to me as I listened to the amazing accounts of these various psychic treatments and operations that the different Spiritist healers possessed varying degrees of healing power. For example, Mrs. Clifford Jensen, Donna Morel's mother and Danny's grandmother, told me about her healing experiences at the hands of three separate mediums—Terte, Blanche and Ading.

I suppose, if we live long enough, we each of us have a number of complaints and afflictions which we would like to have alleviated if possible, particularly if relief can be gained, quickly and painlessly.

Mrs. Jensen's chief troubles as described to me were a double hernia on the right side and a long history of constipation. She also suffered from an allergy which manifested in sores and blisters in the throat. She was often bothered by dizziness. Eight years ago surgery had been performed for the hernias, but the surgeon commented, at the time, he did not believe the operation would prove successful as the hernias were so prolapsed. This proved to have been a correct prediction. When Mrs. Jensen went to the Philippines she had three large protrusions, giving her pain and discomfort.

On Wednesday, April 13, 1966, Terte performed magnetic healing and massage on the hernia area. On the evening of the same day, Blanche removed a teaspoon of pus from the abdomen. Blanche's assistant also massaged the arms and shoulder area to relieve a neuritis condition.

Sunday, April 17, treatment was given by Ading on the throat area. He apparently removed infectious matter by mouth, making contact with her throat, for this purpose, and

then vomiting the material. Photographs were taken of these ministrations.

"What is your condition today, as of May 22?" I asked Mrs. Jensen, when she had concluded her report.

"I feel fine, generally," she said. "There is little remaining evidence of the double hernia. Constipation is no longer a problem. My fainting spells and dizziness are entirely gone. However, my throat condition has returned. But, since I am so much better in every other way, perhaps this condition will also disappear in time. After all, it's only been a few weeks since we've been back from the Philippines. Those people were so wonderful to us, gave us such loving attention, that I was reluctant to leave. We hope to return some day, whether we need any healing treatments or not."

In support of Mrs. Jensen's statement about disappearance of the double hernia, her doctor, Dr. J. M. Digerose, D.C. Ph.C., Burbank, California, kindly granted permission to make public his findings.

To Whom It May Concern:

On February 14, 1966, I gave a treatment to Mrs. Ruth Jensen of Burbank, California, for neuritis in the left shoulder and breast. While treating, she told me of a pain she had had lately in the groin on the right side. On examination, I found a protruding sac—a ventral or inguinal hernia. I recommended her to see a surgeon and have same operated on before it got worse. She came back, three or four times more, for treatment of the shoulder and breast. Each time I examined the hernia and it became larger as time went on. March 11, I released her from neuritic trouble. On June 22 she came back, on account of some back trouble, and she asked me to check on the hernia. *To my amazement—I found no trace of the protruding sac, nor any scar or mark left on the skin from any operation performed.* I asked her what had taken place. She told me she had been to a "Doctor" Eleuterio Terte in the Philippine Islands, and by some "psychic surgery" he had obliterated any trace of a hernia. *Fantastic, to say the least, but what one sees one has to believe.*

(Signed) Dr. John M. Digerose

The oldest patient of those who had come to see me was Mrs.

Katherine Swope, aged 67. She was "quite the life of the party," as evidence of how well she felt, even though she had submitted to abdominal surgery on February 14, 1966, for malignant tumour on the intestine, causing obstruction. A colostomy was done at the time and a staphylococcus infection had developed in the incision area. All this happened before she had gone to the Philippines seeking spiritual healing, since her American surgeon had told her that a second and exploratory operation might have to take place at a later date to determine if the cancer had been completely removed. In any event, he felt this would be necessary before closing the colostomy. Mrs. Swope, as a probable result of this physical condition, had a long, distressing history of dizziness.

Until recently she had served as relief housemother at an institution for wayward youths in Chino, California. She read about the faith and spirit healing in *Fate* magazine. This set her thinking about going to Manila "to see if they couldn't help me.

"The first surgery I saw in Manila," she continued, "was when I went to a meeting with a group of Spiritists who had taken me under their wing and showered me with love and kindness, such as only the Filipinos can. One of the group, a young man, Ading Lugue, removed growths from a woman's abdomen with just his hands; no instruments, no anaesthetic, no pain. It was difficult to believe, even when one saw it. I believed in it to begin with, else I would not have gone there, but it was heartwarming to be reassured by actual sight. Truly, 'seeing is believing.'

"I was praying the entire time Ading was operating on me. When he was trying to close the colostomy, it ran through my mind that if he succeeded it would be fine, but if he didn't, I would not worry.

"I don't know what God might be illustrating by giving power to these particular people; perhaps their faith, love and humility have something to do with it."

Mrs. Swope then described the treatments and operations she had had. On Wednesday, April 13, 1966, Blanche removed a

tablespoon of pus from the infected incision. Contrary to the usual absence of pain, Mrs. Swope said she felt this "spirit surgery." It had been bearable, but she had felt it. On Sunday, April 16, Ading apparently removed more pus by suction, through his mouth, from the same area. A photograph was taken of this action. Objects resembling blood clots were lifted from the abdomen and something looking like a piece of plastic was also taken from the incision Ading had made, which was also photographed.

Magnetic treatments continued several times daily in Mrs. Swope's hotel room during the remainder of her stay in Manila.

Ading made several attempts to close the colostomy opening, but he was apparently unfamiliar with this type of surgery and was unsuccessful. Mrs. Swope said that she had observed it was more difficult for these psychic surgeons to correct conditions that had been left over from regular incisions and operations that had been performed by the medical profession. Ading finally advised her to have her colostomy opening closed surgically by her own doctor.

"How much, then, do you feel these spirit healers have done for you?" I asked.

Said Mrs. Swope: "For one thing, my dizziness is entirely gone. I was so weak physically when I went to the Philippines. Now, as you see, my strength has returned, and is increasing each day, along with a general feeling of well-being. I was examined by my doctor on May 9. He said my condition was good and he was now satisfied my colostomy could be closed without an exploratory. Pus is still seeping from the incision of February 14, although to a lesser degree. Two stitches have worked out through the skin since my return from the Philippines. The doctor feels that the infection will clear up when all remaining stitches are gone. I plan to have the colostomy closed permanently when Medicare (a form of health service) comes in." [Her scheduled surgery to have this done was set for August 3, 1966.]

"Which spirit healer do you feel did you the most good?" I asked.

"That's hard to say," she replied. "Apparently they all contributed their share. They work together without any feeling of jealousy or friction. Lollie Loza, a healer I didn't mention before, and Ading, are associates in healing. All Spiritists consider themselves brothers and sisters under God. When I went to leave, Ading said to me: 'When you get home I will be with you just the same. I will be with you there.' You will think this just my imagination, but the other night I felt Ading's presence in my living room. I wanted to see him and I felt that I did, or rather, that he was there. I felt comforted and happy that my friend could be with me in spirit."

The feeling of closeness that Mrs. Swope evidenced for her new-found friends and helpers, so many thousands of miles around the globe, was as touching as it was sincere.

"Since Manila, I am a more spiritual person," Mrs. Swope concluded. "I find that part of me is more awake to the miracles that can be performed through faith in God's power. My greatest joy is going without dizzy attacks. When I went to the Philippines, I hoped that if nothing else was done, those attacks might be stopped. So far, so good. It's wonderful to know that God can endow man with this spiritual healing power which man can train himself to use, in God's name, for the glory of the Father and the benefit of humanity."

In the face of such testimony, I could only wish that all people, particularly the "doubting Thomases" of the world, could have been brought into the presence of these people, representative of countless more who had undergone similar healing experiences.

Then there was Ann McPhie who had taken her daughter, Teru, now aged nine, to the Philippines in the hopes that a cure might be found for her failing eyesight. But before she told me the almost unbelievable story about Teru, she related a healing she, herself, had obtained for a skin disease, a fungus termed "jungle rot", which had covered both hands since childhood.

"I had consulted numerous doctors in the States and abroad," she said, "but they had been unable to provide a medication

which could either halt or cure the fungus. Then, in July, 1964, when I arrived with Teru in the Philippines, I was operated on twice by Blanche. You've got to believe this. With his fingertips he picked out fifty to one hundred objects resembling white stickers or worms. After this psychic surgery, the skin of both palms and fingers dried and peeled for several weeks. When this was finished, my hands were restored to normal. There has been no recurrence of the former condition."

The story of how "spirit surgery" saved her daughter Teru's threatened eyesight was told so well by Ann McPhie in *Fate* magazine March, 1966, that I have been granted permission to repeat it here. In substance, this is just what Mrs. McPhie told me personally on Sunday, May 22, with her bright-eyed daughter, Teru, present, as living proof of the results achieved.

What do you do when a king-sized miracle happens to you?

You tell your friends and they start taking up a collection to whisk your slipping sanity to the nearest analyst. Nevertheless, I've just decided this is too big a story to keep quiet about any longer. The searching world has a right to know that the magic of believing and the force of God are as manifest today as when water became wine and Lazarus rose from the dead.

It was a sweltering night in Manila in July, 1964. My seven-year-old daughter, Teru, and I were taking the long way around from Australia to our new home in California. Perhaps I'd chosen the Orient route to stall for time, putting off the dreaded diagnosis about Teru's eyes when we reached Los Angeles. There was something wrong, but our Australian family doctor had refused to commit himself and only urged we get a specialist's opinion. In order to read, Teru had to hold a book right under her nose, and her eyes constantly ran like two waterfalls.

A knock on the hotel room door that night signalled the arrival of my old friend, Zeina Amara, whom we'd accidentally bumped into in Manila. She had insisted we go that evening to witness the wondrous healings performed by men called Spiritists.

"I'm ready to see those old witchdoctors of yours," I laughed as she walked in.

"You'll see more than you bargained for, Ann," Zeina replied, earnestly.

I wanted to tease her more about this new mystic kick, but the seriousness of her attitude stopped me. So, with a good-night kiss for my little girl, along with stern instructions to obey the baby sitter, we were off, on what would prove to be the greatest experience of my life.

A brief taxi trip later, we walked into the living room of the large home of Guillermo Tolentino, on Retiro Street. At least two hundred Filipino peasants were crowded into it, watching a man in a sport shirt who was bending over a sheet-covered table. Obtaining permission, Zeina led me straight to the operating table.

A small boy lay there, gently touching a swollen spot on his leg. I saw the Spiritist point his finger at this spot. *I saw the skin open, to expose an angry-looking ball of flesh about the size of a large marble.* I saw the "surgeon" calmly reach into the wound and with two fingers take out this reddish mass. *I saw, but my mind could not accept it.*

My eyes raced to the child's face, expecting to read there the excruciating pain caused by this seeming barbarism. But the boy was composed, even smiling a little, and apparently in no discomfort whatsoever. I turned to Zeina, but she ignored my stark disbelief.

"The medium's name is Blanche," Zeina whispered. "The spirit of God is operating through Blanche's trance. Watch him, Ann, don't be afraid."

Blanche dropped the growth into a pan held by an attendant and then, with his finger, gently rubbed the incision. I saw the parted skin come together until only the faintest line evidenced the spot of the wound. Instantly healed, the boy jumped off the table to make room for the next patient, smiling his gratitude at Blanche, as he left the room.

I stood rooted, with my mouth gaping, as I saw an opening appear in the side of a woman's breast. Blanche again reached in and removed a grey-looking object resembling an anchovy. I've got to be dreaming, I thought, wildly. *And yet, that awesome night I witnessed over one hundred operations for the removal of what appeared to be inflamed appendices, goitres, kidney stones, tumours, and growths from every part of the body. In each case, there was no pain*

evident on the patient's face, little or no bleeding, and instantaneous healing!

When at last Zeina and I returned to the hotel room, I was confused and dead tired, but still protesting at what I had witnessed. "There just has to be a rational explanation for this, Zeina, like mass-hypnosis, or something."

"Honey, the facts are so easy they're hard for people like us to understand," she replied. "It's simply the biggest force in the universe working through the absolute belief of these Spiritists who know that it's there." She went on to explain that they refuse any fee or gratuity, for that would be like charging for God's love.

There was almost a note of sadness as she asked, "Ann, don't you believe in God or have any faith at all?"

Just then, Teru sleepily announced that she wished to see the "magic doctors" and I was terribly glad for the interruption. In the light of all I'd seen that night, how could I admit to Zeina that I'd thought God was a father-type figurehead for the Church?

The next afternoon found Zeina, Teru and me in Quezon City, a small town on the far side of Manila where the Spiritists had gone to heal those too far away to come into the city proper. Again, the operations were held in a home large enough to contain the multitude of peasants who flocked there. Small slips of paper were passed around. Those wishing cures wrote their names and described their pain or illness.

I glanced around at many faces, all wearing the same look of hope and assurance. Well, it can't hurt if Teru's eyes are just *looked* at, I thought. So, on impulse, I wrote my daughter's name, followed by the description, "Eyes weak and watery."

After the papers were collected, I was sorry. My rusty wheel of faith had quit turning after only one short forward revolution.

Then my attention focused on a young woman who was being helped to the table. She was bent with pain and clutching her side.

"Ask Blanche if my finger can be used to do the operating," I whispered. Zeina conveyed my request in her smattering knowledge of Tagalog.

To my amazement, Blanche took my hand. I had just a

moment to observe his glazed eyes which stared right through me. Then his hand guided my extended finger to the woman's stomach, holding it about twelve inches from her side. *Instantly her flesh parted*!

I felt my own stomach lurch as Blanche reached into the opening and removed a bloated red appendix. Taking a tablespoon, he scooped out infectious matter from the internal, cavity. Moments later, her abdomen healed without a trace of a scar. The woman walked proudly away.

My knees were shaking under me. I tried to fight against the dark fog closing in as Blanche again used my finger as a God-directed instrument to part the skin of an old man's neck. Then another woman stood before the psychic surgeon and he began picking small objects from her palms. My friend's sharp nudge brought the room back into focus.

"It looks like she's got jungle rot like you," Zeina said. "Go on—put your hands by hers."

Jungle rot, the familiar name for a fungus I'd been plagued with since a child . . .

[At this point, Mrs. McPhie was operated on by Blanche for this skin condition she had personally described to me.]

Suddenly Teru's name was called out. She came forward slowly, her wide eyes showing the shock she felt at all this. Blanche raised her eyelids and peered close. I could only speak in a whisper, "Is there anything wrong?"

He nodded.

Zeina said, "He says there's something wrong with both eyes."

Teru went white, grabbing me fiercely round the legs and holding on for dear life. "No, Mummy, don't let them touch me!" she screamed. "It's too scary!"

Zeina practically pushed us outside where we could talk.

"Ann, you must get through to the child. Tomorrow the surgeons leave for two weeks, and you'll be gone before they return. Can't you see you were led to Manila, that our meeting here was no accident?" she urged.

And so I tried to convince my little girl that a divine hand had led us here, but my voice sounded hollow. It was only my friend's mountain of faith that gave me the courage to speak at all.

Teru was no match for the adults bombarding her with pleas and arguments. Big tears streamed down her face as she finally released her death grip on me and walked with resignation back toward that operating table.

The room was almost deserted now. As Blanche walked to meet us, his gaze was normal. He was seeing our world again. The trance was over and there would be no more healings that day. I heard Zeina begging him to help Teru while I stood woodenly by. When Blanche finally agreed to see us early the next day before his trip, I felt I'd been granted a stay of execution. At least I still had time to change my mind.

Teru lsept soundly as I paced back and forth that interminable night. My table of belief stood on such wobbly legs and on this swaying framework I was going to place my only child—more precious to me than life. I think now, God must have shaken His head at my ambiguous appeal.

"Thy will be done, God," I prayed. "But if anything goes wrong, if she goes blind, I'll kill myself!"

As the sky lightened to dawn, I still wore fear like a heavy coat. It was my daughter's completely calm attitude that held me together as we faced Blanche that morning. His stare indicated the trance already was accomplished, as he motioned Teru to the table. Then he began gently to rub her right eyelid, seemingly to work something from the outside of the eye toward the bridge of her nose.

"Mummy, I feel something coming out!" Teru exclaimed. And with that, Blanche held an object resembling a small grey stone between his fingers.

"Stop! Don't do the other eye!" my fear cried out, but the psychic surgeon was listening only to a divine guiding voice and not to me. He began to rub Teru's other eyelid and soon the second small stone appeared. My relief and joy knew no bounds as my little girl sat up and smiled directly, pointedly, at me.

It's been almost a year now since these wonders occurred. *Teru's eyes have been thoroughly checked and tested by a well-known ophthalmologist in Los Angeles and pronounced perfect in all respects. The remainder of my fungus, which Blanche removed in a second operation, immediately after Teru's surgery, has never returned to torment me.*

This first-person account by Ann McPhie was reported by B. Ann Slate. Mrs. McPhie told me that she had experienced considerable ridicule and unhappiness from relating these "miracles," especially about her daughter, and she did not release her name or true identity earlier to protect Teru's privacy, who now attends a church school.

The ophthalmologist consulted in California examined Teru's eyes and stated that any prior surgery was an impossibility as no scars were in evidence. He apparently did not believe Ann's account of the Manila operation.

Nevertheless, Teru's eyes remain perfect to this day. They were tested December 1, 1964, following the psychic surgery that past July. Her score on the eye chart test was 20–20 vision. No internal scars of former "surgery" were present.

In March of 1965 and again in March of 1966, Teru's eyes were tested by a doctor in a regular school health examination and both times recorded at 20–20 vision.

The "small grey stones" from Teru's eyes were placed in a vial immediately after the operation. Alcohol was added to preserve them, but en route to California, Mrs. McPhie heard that formaldehyde was a better preservative and so mixed the chemicals. Regrettably the "stones" began to bloat and slowly to disintegrate. The vial was left with the ophthalmologist for laboratory examination. He kept it a month. When Mrs. MacPhie, tired of waiting for the results of the analysis, finally asked to have the vial returned to her, the nurse said, "He thinks it is vegetable matter."

Mrs. McPhie believes no laboratory test was made. The "stones" were gone except for small sedimentary pieces remaining in the bottom of the vial, which Mrs. McPhie still retains in her possession.

In the presence of her most attractive and radiantly happy daughter, Teru, smiling at me with her wonderfully clear eyes, a grateful Mrs. McPhie, who had come some miles to give her testimony, ended by saying:

"*If I could speak to the peoples of the world, I would say: 'This is*

the evidence I offer you. Miracles haven't stopped just because the last chapter in our Bible has been written. God's spirit of love still works daily in the Philippines through simple, dark men whose faith is big enough to let Him in!' "

CHAPTER TWENTY

A THREAT OF "REPUDIATON"

OF ALL THE MANY coast-to-coast lectures I delivered on the subject of "faith and spirit healing in the Philippines with special reference to the psychic surgery of Tony, Agpaoa," perhaps my appearance as guest speaker before members of the famous Los Angeles Breakfast Club, Wednesday morning, April 13, 1966, represented one of my largest and most distinguished audiences.

The club, founded in 1925, was unique in the history of Los Angeles, and the States for that matter. Its once-a-week breakfast session was attended by some five to eight hundred of the city's leading men and women, who usually filled the huge clubhouse banquet hall to enjoy what Harold B. Link, highly-gifted and beloved club manager, described as "a programme of wonderment, merriment and music." The programme format had been time-tested, starting off with its standardised "ham and egg" breakfast, sparked by a group of razzing members known as "roosters" to whom no thing and no person was sacred. The proceedings were enlivened by Frank Konyi's long-featured piano accompaniments and interpolations, which introduced humourous sitting up exercises, followed by a rousing old-time sing-song, then a famous entertainer or singer, setting the stage finally for a guest speaker of either national or local renown.

What happened as a result of my talk produced dramatic repercussions and, for this reason, I need to set the stage prior to my report of it.

The weekly bulletin of the Los Angeles Breakfast Club announced my forthcoming lecture in this manner:

"AN EYEWITNESS REPORT OF UNBELIEVABLE OCCURRENCES IN THE PHILIPPINES"
Harold Sherman

Because of his leadership in the field of extra-sensory perception, Harold Sherman was invited, last January, to join a group of scientists on an expedition to the Philippines to observe the methods and accomplishments of an amazing young surgeon-healer, Tony Agpaoa, of Quezon City, a suburb of Manila.

William Henry Belk, businessman (of the famous Belk Bros. department store family) and president of the Belk Research Foundation, headed the group. Harold Sherman, himself, is president of ESP Research Associates Foundation, of Little Rock, Arkansas; and is author of many published books, his latest being, *The New TNT—Miraculous Power Within You*, the theme of which is, *Success and Happiness are From Within.* What these scientists saw and experienced in Quezon City will amaze you.

I warned them at the very start of my talk that what I was about to report would seem so unbelievable that it would test the open-mindedness of everyone present. I told my audience that, through my lifetime, pioneering interest in extra-sensory perception, I had long since been accustomed to scepticism. But I went on to say that I welcomed honest, open-minded scepticism as the only way that new knowledge could be tested and eventually accepted. I observed, however, that our culture tended to condemn what it did not understand, often without investigation.

With this as a preamble, I launched into the talk on Tony who *purportedly was performing major operations with his bare hands.* There was no difficulty in holding the attention of the audience. You could not only have heard a pin drop, you could have heard a feather. The expressions on faces were as awe-struck as they were unbelieving. This had not been unexpected.

I stated, during the course of my thirty-minute presentation, which was also being broadcast over a radio station, that it required, as my listeners must realise, quite a degree of courage to report on such a fantastic and obviously controversial subject as psychic surgery, which would call for much more research and investigation before we could begin to understand or evaluate it.

I reported only what my associates and I had apparently witnessed and experienced, and this, of course, was sensational and incredible enough.

When I had finished, I was given warm applause. Then, as was the long-established custom, Harold Link presented his always inspired word-summary, delivered against an ad lib musical accompaniment by Konyi, at the piano. This particular morning he had felt my discourse very deeply and his commentary just as deeply moved the Breakfast Clubbers. I have just listened to a tape-recorded replay of what he said. In the light of what followed, let me share it with you:

"What did you think of this man, Harold Sherman, this morning? Did you listen to him with open-minded scepticism that may lead to new knowledge and new experience?

"Did you stop to think that, around two thousand years ago, a man said to his disciples, 'Thou shalt see greater things than these'?

"Every time we lift the horizon of our knowledge, we find more things about which we are ignorant. How vast is our ignorance! 'Thou shalt see greater things than these.'

"I wonder, if they bring this boy to these United States of America, how can they protect him from the flood of people seeking healings, of people willing to take a chance? Will they have to let the patient down through a roof in order to reach him as they did two thousand years ago?

"But remember that with faith as a mustard seed, our scepticism may be overcome, and may lead us to new experiences.

"And then there was the great, that noble line, 'The God-power is everywhere!'

"Let's ponder these things in our hearts."

I went on my way after this talk, from Los Angeles, across country to San Francisco and Denver, and back home to Arkansas. Then I had to fly back to California, some weeks later. On arrival, I found a letter awaiting me at my Hollywood address from Harold Link. It was on the Los Angeles Breakfast Club writing paper and it came as something of a shock.

May 25, 1966

Dear Harold:

I am enclosing for your perusal and comment, a miserably poor "Thermofax" copy of the "Xerox" copy that I have received, of a letter to Dr. E. Forrest Boyd. As you will note, it regards Tony Agpaoa.

From our letterhead, you'll note that Dr. Boyd is one of our club directors; and his son (also an M.D.) is chairman of our board.

Dr. Boyd is a good Presbyterian ("Layman of the Year in 1960"); and, for many years, was examining physician for the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, in charge of qualifying Presbyterian medical missionaries before they were sent to foreign fields.

After receiving this letter (from the Emmanuel Co-operative Hospital and School of Midwifery in Manila) he felt that the club should "repudiate" the talk and the report you gave of "Tony's activities."

Will you be good enough to send me anything that this expedition has turned out in the way of printed reports of the findings? My long acquaintance with you, and my confidence in your ability to report accurately what you saw, make me reluctant to accede to such a request—for *repudiation*. I know, too, that you went on to see and be convinced by Agpaoa, even after the highly unfavourable report of the Manila Medical Society.

What do you have, Harold, to strengthen my personal situation? All good wishes . . . and thank you!

Having read this letter, and the suggestion of "repudiative action" it contained, I gave my attention to the enclosed letter, which had been written in answer to an inquiry Dr. Boyd had made by Synteke D. Demonteverde, Director of the Emmanuel

Co-operative Hospital. The reply from Mr. Demonteverde was devastating. He said:

Dear Dr. Boyd:

Thank you very much for deciding to write to us here at Emmanuel Co-operative Hospital. Of course, anything as fantastic as what has been described to your Los Angeles Breakfast Club, regarding a Mr. Tony Agpaoa, should have more investigation.

The report about surgeon healers has been investigated by the Philippines Medical Association some three or four years ago. The conclusion was published in the Manila newspapers in 1962 that the whole procedure is a fake and the person involved as a healer-surgeon is nothing but a talented conjurer or magician.

It was found out, for example, that after an appendectomy supposedly done by this healer-surgeon, the specimen turned out to be a piece of intestine from a chicken.

Most Filipinos, whether faith healers or politicians, appeal to the people for a large following by proclaiming themselves as devout Catholics, thus giving some touch of the miracle and the divine to their work—almost giving the impression that what they do has no objection or disapproval of the Catholic Church. But there are so many fake healers in the Philippines and they have some following among the uneducated and the gullible.

Mr. Harold Sherman was taken completely in if he believed such unscientific healing to be true. In fact, the Philippines Medical Association is waging a continuous fight against such particular form of quackery. All doctors here know of the existence and rampancy of quacks and faith healers, but they are not believed by the educated, and the Philippine Press do not even consider them good enough to print because nobody here believes these stories. . . .

Sincerely

(Signed) SYNTEKL D. DEMONTEVERDE

Director

You can now turn back to Chapter 11, and re-read some of the outstanding pro and con news items on faith and spirit healing which have appeared in the Manila newspapers during

the past years. I have concealed nothing of pertinent value, on either side of this psychic surgery question throughout.

At this point, it is well to put on record a letter written by my friend, Zan Overall of Studio City, California, who has been deeply interested in extra-sensory perception and especially in the reports on psychic surgeons. He addressed his letter to "His Eminence Rufino Cardinal Santos, Manila, Republic of the Philippines.

Your Eminence:

6 July 1964

I recently read an article regarding the healing activities of Eleuterio Terte, of San Fabian, Luzon. A copy of the article is enclosed.

I note that Mr. Terte and his followers claim membership in the Roman Catholic Church, so I am writing you in the hope that you will be kind enough to give me some information regarding Mr. Terte. If what is claimed is true, it would be very important. I note that moves are afoot for spreading Mr. Terte's work in the United States.

Specifically, could you tell me what investigation the Church has made of Mr. Terte's activities, with what result? I note that motion pictures apparently have been made of Mr. Terte's psychic surgery.

My sincerest best wishes,
(Signed) ZAN OVERALL

P.S. I am writing to learn the Church's attitude on this matter before making any effort to contact Mr. Terte. I would like to know, for example, whether Mr. Terte and Mr. Guillermo Tolentino are communicants in the Roman Catholic Church.

The reply of His Eminence:

July 30, 1964

Archbispado de Manila
1000 General Solano St.,
P.O. Box 132
Manila, Philippines

Dear Mr. Overall:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 6, last,

inquiring about the healing activities of a certain Eleuterio Terte of San Fabian, Pangasinan, Philippines.

From information gathered, it appears that the person concerned and his associates are *not* Catholics. They follow a doctrine based on the general teachings of the sect which we call Spiritists, contrary to the teaching of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

The persons mentioned in your enclosed copy of an article on psychic healings are supposed to be professed members of the above-mentioned sect.

Although the ecclesiastical authorities have not declared anything on the matter, we can say that they cannot lay any claim on ecclesiastical approval, much less recommendation.

Hoping this could be of any help in your information and proper guidance, with our best wishes, we are

Devotedly yours in Christ
Rufino Card, Santos
Archbishop of Manila

Here, then, were two strong denunciations and discreditations of not only Tony Agpaoa but, by implication, the work of Terte and all other so-called faith and spirit healers in the Philippines.

I could well sympathise with the spot that my friend, Harold Link, was in. I had addressed his Los Angeles Breakfast Club on at least four other occasions in the past ten years, and he had, as he stated, placed complete faith in me that I would not, at least knowingly, misrepresent or fabricate. Certainly I had no sane reason for doing so, and only a reputation which meant all and everything to me to risk.

What answer could be given to Link which would satisfy those who had accepted reports like these, that, despite such adverse comments, psychic surgery should be given the benefit of the doubt, until further medical and scientific research could be undertaken and more dependable, unbiased information obtained?

The best existing evidence, at the moment, was the 16 mm colour motion pictures of a variety of Tony's operations, all apparently done with his bare hands. These had been taken by

professional Filipino photographers. The films showed teeth extractions, removal of polyps from the nose, an abscess from behind the eyeball, cysts from a shoulder and from the surface of the stomach, and an abdominal operation wherein the abdomen was seemingly opened wide, a growth cut out and the incision closed, leaving no scar. All of this was done without sanitary precaution or anaesthetics, the patients remaining fully conscious, suffering little or no pain.

It so happened that I had a special showing of this film scheduled for presentation the following night for the friends of my publicity and public relations representative, Mrs. Lee Atkinson. This would be an ideal time for Harold Link, Dr. Boyd and any other doctors and surgeons, or other important members of the Breakfast Club—the entire board of directors, if desired—to sit in judgment on what they saw. I got Link on the phone and made this proposal.

"It's a good idea," he said, "if I can get Dr. Boyd and some of the others who had raised objections, to take the time to view it."

"It's only fair that this much consideration should be shown me," I contended, "since my character and reputation appear to be involved."

Link agreed and said he thought whatever action, if any, was taken, it should not be exercised until and unless I had had an opportunity to make some defence against these unfavourable reports from the Philippines.

While I was waiting for Link to call back after checking with his principals, an idea hit me. If I could prevail upon Bobbie Gironda to round up all these dedicated American patients who had submitted to psychic surgery, and if they would be so good as to support me by their presence at this showing, and testify before these doctors and surgeons, I felt confident that this would impress these men far more than any motion pictures, however spectacular they might be.

When I reached Bobbie on the phone, she said: "Leave it to me. I'll have the patients there. I'm sure they'll be glad to testify on behalf of psychic surgery in appreciation for what these

healers have done for them and to save you and Mr. Link from embarrassment."

A little later, Link phoned back to tell me that Dr. Boyd and several other club members had decided to accept my invitation to the showing. It was held in Lee Atkinson's suite in the Cambridge Company on Sunset Strip. Bill Brown, co-owner with Dorothy and Charlie Collins, dear friends of mine, of a 16mm projector, furnished the machine and ran the picture. He also brought with him three doctor friends who wished to view it. One was said to have been a surgeon specialising in urology, another general surgery and the third, an oral surgeon. They were not introduced to me and did not want their names to be known.

In addition to this trio, Lee Atkinson had some twenty of her friends. Bobbie Gironda arrived with the group of patients whom I had met and who had given me their case histories some days before. Present with Harold Link was Dr. E. Forest Boyd and Dr. F. LaGrand Noyes, who had long been interested in extra-sensory perception. They apparently represented the Los Angeles Breakfast Club, as some of the others could not make it, either at the last minute, or through previous engagements.

There was, understandably, an undercurrent of tenseness in the atmosphere. Bill Brown's three surgeon friends seated themselves on the side, as near the screen as was possible. The private office was crowded with viewers seated on the floor and standing at the back and out into the hall.

In a short introductory commentary, I explained that the pictures about to be shown, from a medical and scientific standpoint, would leave much to be desired, although what they would see would perhaps prove indicative. I further stated that my foundation and Belk's planned another research expedition to the Philippines later in the year, at which time we were taking top scientists and doctors to investigate further psychic surgery.

I then surprised all present by introducing Belk, who had flown in from Miami, Florida, to be with me. When Henry met Dr. Boyd, he greeted him cordially, remarking that he

must have known his late father, William Henry Belk, since his parent, a fellow-Presbyterian, had helped finance the building of over three hundred Presbyterian churches, and many hospitals, including the Sarah Walker hospital in Laos, erected in honour of his grandmother.

Dr. Boyd responded warmly that he had sent foreign medical missionaries to this hospital, had been there several times himself, as well as in the Philippines, and had indeed known of Henry's father and his philanthropies as well as his religious work.

Henry said: "Dr. Boyd, Sherman and I are only interested in the truth. There are fakers and charlatans in the Philippines, as anywhere else and we have no more use for them than you do. But there are also healers who are performing genuine phenomena, and these are the ones we want to discover and study."

During the running of the 16 mm picture, I noticed that the three surgeon friends of Bill Brown were whispering among themselves. When the showing was over, I announced that Henry and I were ready to answer whatever questions we could. But first I played *a trump card*—one that took everyone completely by surprise.

"Now," I said, "I would like to present to you a group of American patients who were operated upon by different psychic surgeons in the Philippines. They have come here tonight at considerable inconvenience to themselves, in order to give you their medical records and case histories, and to let you question them about their experiences and examine them physically if you wish."

There was an instant stir among the three surgeons up front. Without giving the patients a chance to open their mouths, they got up and walked out, giving no expression of appreciation for the courtesies extended them. It was plainly obvious they did not wish to face this kind of evidence and testimony. It might be one thing to criticise the picture, to brand it fraudulent, to say that the operations on film were faked. But to have to admit to having met actual patients who had gone

to the Philippines with medical records of operations and other ailments, and returned greatly benefitted by psychic surgery, was just too much. They did not even want it known that they had been there, I learned later. One of them said he would sue if whoever was taking flashlight pictures ever published one with his likeness in it!

I had had no intention of "putting anyone on the spot," but I would like to have heard a scientific explanation for the undeniable fact that these patients had submitted to various types of spiritual healings and psychic surgery and had, for the most part, completely recovered. Could this have been faked? Did Dan Guin just imagine he was walking around without crutches? Did little Teru McPhie just think she had 20–20 eyesight? Was Mrs. Swope deluded into believing that she no longer had dizzy spells? Had Mrs. McPhie been hypnotised into thinking her hands were free of fungus? Donna Morel's itching in her ears: had it ever been there? And was the disappearance of Mrs. Jensen's double hernia all in the mind?

Dr. Boyd, Dr. Noyes and Harold Link remained for a time, while Bobbie Gironda presented some of the above-mentioned patients. Danny Guin demonstrated that his crippled leg was crippled no longer—thanks to psychic surgery—by walking up to the front of the room and telling his own story.

The next day I received a little note from Harold Link, saying simply, "Thank you, again, for 'holding up my arms,' with the meeting last night!"

A friend told me later that Link had said to him, "If my doctor friends were not convinced, they were, at least mystified."

In any event, the threatened "repudiation" was off. But it is only fair to report that the wave of scepticism is not over. Bill Brown's three surgeon friends left unconvinced and making disparaging remarks. When I wrote to my friend Dr. Wanderman in New York, told him of this meeting and the letter of condemnation that had been received by Dr. Boyd from the director of Emmanuel Co-operative Hospital in the Philippines, he replied:

I still know Tony is a FAKE. The two cysts he did were done badly with a knife, the wounds closed with adhesive, and not magic, and the faith healer uses forceps.

I never saw him enter the abdomen and Swope and Decker were, at best, completely fooled by a bad sleight-of-hand expert. The photos show Tony's hand concealing the wounds. The jar supposedly containing pathology was an insult to an investigator.

The Catholic hospital in Manila was right.

There are better testimonials from patients in Lourdes or any Christian Science church.

I have been called many times for an opinion and always said I saw nothing and refused to go on any panel or TV. I said my investigation was for you and not paid for, so there was no prejudice for or against.

Go slow!

So, there you have it, the pros and the cons. What do you think?

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE CHARGE OF FRAUD

IT IS INEVITABLE, in an exploration of "far out" areas such as "psychic surgery, "that charges of fraud and trickery will be made. It is also possible, human nature being what it is, that some of these charges can be sustained. But a scientist friend of mine, who has devoted thirty years of his life to research in this field, has stated:

> "The evidence for fraud must be examined as carefully as the evidence for genuine phenomena. Conjurers have demonstrated that it is possible to duplicate almost everything by trickery that can be performed by genuine sensitives. But while there are many charlatans who prey upon the guillible through every manner of hocus-pocus, this fact does not, in itself, disprove the existence of true phenomena.
>
> "Nor can anyone make blanket charges that because one individual has been caught in an act of deception, all persons engaged in apparently similar practices are also fraudulent. The field of extra-sensory perception is too vast and complex to write it off by a surface display of trickery which may purport to show how operations can be faked. Every profession has its fraudulent practitioners. Unhappily, however, ESP has not, as yet, been generally accepted by science. There is, therefore, the tendency among sceptics, upon presentation of any evidence or claims of deception, to discredit all reported cases of phenomena without investigating."

After Belk returned from the Philippines in February, 1966, he arranged with a photographer, and maker of documentary films, Elgin Ciampi, and his associate, Renee du-Bonnet, a reported sensitive, to go to the Islands and secure further motion pictures and information on faith and spirit healings.

When I learned of this, I immediately registered a strong protest. My contention was that if any documentary was to be made, it should be supported by a medical staff of American investigators so that a complete medical and pictorial record could be secured and issued officially with foundation backing, leaving no doubt as to the nature and character of the phenomena. I had such interest developing through a major film company on the coast, as well as with top medical people. However, since Belk had already advanced financial backing to the Ciampi and duBonnet team, and had sent them on their way, the research plan then under discussion had to be suspended.

Henry heard nothing from Ciampi and duBonnet after their departure, but the two of them learned of my objection to their venture and were hostile to me during their stay abroad. They made contacts with all the people Henry and I had met, on introductions arranged by him. These included Tolentino, his Spiritist members and mediums, the Al Herons, Tony Agpaoa, and others. From all reports, Ciampi and duBonnet were treated hospitably and co-operatively by everyone.

Shortly before their return to the States, in June, Ciampi telephoned Henry from the Philippines and reported that " 'psychic surgery' was a gigantic hoax, an organised racket, which was fast becoming, due to recent publicity, 'big business.' " He further stated that he and his associate, Renee duBonnet, had all the evidence photographically, reports of case histories, knowledge of the trick techniques used, and could duplicate the fake operations themselves. He said they had been working with the Philippines Medical Association in preparing this exposé, that their lives had been threatened, and that they were having to leave the country, incognito, aided by the United States Embassy.

Henry was upset at this news. Without waiting to see the films, or weigh the evidence Ciampi and Renee duBonnet claimed they possessed, he wrote to friends and informed other interested parties of these charges of fraud.

When Ciampi and Renee duBonnet arrived back in the

States, it was learned that the motion picture films had not yet been developed for lack of finances, but they had a few still pictures which would illustrate how Tony performed abdominal operations by trickery, which Renee duBonnet, herself, had learned to do.

I saw these two or three photographs on a trip I made to New York to meet Ciampi and Renee duBonnet, who had not felt kindly towards me. They understood my attitude much better when I had explained my point of view. The pictures looked, in all honesty, like duplicates of Tony's abdominal operation (as reproduced in the pictorial section of this book). But they would not reveal the techniques they said Tony and others were using to fool the patients and make them believe genuine operations had been performed on them.

They said that the $8,000 (about £2,700) advanced by Henry Belk for their documentary had not been sufficient. They proposed that, if I would pay them $15,000 (about £5,000) and give them twenty-five per cent. interest of all profits to be derived from my book and the documentary, they would turn over all films, when developed, and their complete story and pictures to me, as edited, and step out of the situation entirely, leaving me to do what I wished with the material.

They further stated that they presumed I did not want to have any part in the perpetuation of a fraud or hoax. Since they had uncovered the colossal deception, I should cancel this book. I should tell *their* story instead, so as not to mislead the public, particularly desperately-ill men and women who were spending their last dollars to go to the Philippines in the forlorn hope of regaining their health.

I telephoned their proposition to Henry, at his North Miami, Florida home. He replied that he had put up all the money he intended to invest. He admitted that he had no contractual control over the film they had made, that they had been given permission to produce it as they saw fit, so long as he received, eventually, a return of his $8,000. (Henry had insisted on assigning to the ESP Research Associates Foundation any

possible monies that might be forthcoming from his fifty per cent. of any subsequent profits to be derived.)

"I would think," said Henry, "in the interest of *truth*, and in appreciation of my investment, that they would turn the material over to you for inclusion in your book. If there is truth in their contention that fraud is so widespread, the public needs to know it as soon as possible."

"I have told them," I said, "that I am willing to publish their pictures and story as a part of this book in the interest of a fair and impartial report, but I cannot meet their financial demands."

"Then they'll have to write their own book and get out the film the best way they can," said Henry. "I have done all I am going to do."

The charges that Ciampi and Renee duBonnet made, as reported to Henry, to me and to others, may be summarised as follows:

1. That they have caught Tony and others in trickery.
2. That Tony's "psychic surgery" is a fake.
3. That there are a number of "stock" operations which he performs over and over, including the removal of polyps from the nose and growths from the abdomen.
4. That they have contacted "suppliers" of animal parts, plastic gags and devices with which Tony has performed his "trick operations."
5. That, equipped with these devices, Renee duBonnet has performed a fake abdominal operation which has been photographed as an illustration of how it is done.
6. That Renee duBonnet, as a sensitive, had had "revealed to her," in many instances, how these tricks were executed.
7. That Tony and other "psychic surgeons", most of them Union Espiritista Cristiana de Filipinas members, headed by Tolentino, are all part of a gigantic racket, each protecting the other, in a scheme to mulct the public.
8. That many of the "patients" themselves are sent to Tony

and others by "gang members," and that these people are accomplices to the fraud that is being perpetrated, with "protection money" being paid, and so on.

9. That the lives of Ciampi and Renee duBonnet were threatened by guns when they were able to solve this fraudulent practice.
10. That for their own safety they had to leave the country, incognito, aided and abetted by the United States Embassy.
11. That they have had the help of the Philippines Medical Association in getting the evidence and preparing this exposure.
12. That Tony is receiving perhaps as much as $100 (about £35) a week in the mail from Americans and others, desiring treatments and operations, in addition to the monthly donation of $1,000 (about £335) Belk had voluntarily been sending Tony, to help in his healing work. And Tony is now building a fine home and clinic in Baguio City.
13. That Tony, despite his statements that he never charges for his "operations," has been collecting and soliciting contributions on the side.

In the face of these charges and allegations, with the remainder of this book having been written, aside from this chapter, before they were made, I have seen no reason to change any of the contents because they have been truthfully reported, containing as much as was known and observed at the time. You, the reader, have been spared nothing of a pro or con nature. You, at every stage of our investigation, to date, have known as much as we were able to observe and discover.

In our comparatively short stay in the Philippines, Henry and I did not have any parts or growths purportedly removed from bodies, or samples of apparent blood, sent for laboratory tests. This was obviously an oversight. I had expected that Dr. Wanderman would undertake this when he arrived. But, as previously reported in this account, he refused to do this,

declaring it unnecessary on the grounds he had already detected fraud. Even so, a pathological report would have clinched this, once and for all, as far as the operation he witnessed was concerned.

The moment Henry heard these charges of fraud he wrote letters to Victor Pulido, an associate of Tony's who had assisted in the reception of patients and in the "operating room," to Ulpiano B. Guiang, who had helped secure data on patients, as a part of our investigation, as well as to Tony, himself. He asked, point-blank, for their answers to these accusations.

The replies of all three, in the light of these bewildering and conflicting developments, should be of great interest.

First, from Victor Pulido:

> Mr. Belk, after you left with Tony for Taipei and Tokyo, Japan, I was still at Manila up to the month of March. I had to wait for Tony because, when I left my farm in the Island of Mindanao, about six hundred miles from Manila, I promised my tenants that Tony will join me to have them operated on and healed.
>
> I bought our tickets. Tony, Samuel (Tony's attorney) and I left on March 9. I bought the tickets at midnight because we have to start at dawn, due to the fact that if we start during the day there are so many patients waiting for Tony, I am afraid he may not come again to Mindanao.
>
> In short, we arrived in my house at Del Monte, Bukidnon. My house is just three kilometres from the pineapple plantation of the Philippine Packing Corporation. Tony rested one hour and, after that, he started operating on a patient with a tumour in the uterus. He made the operation in practically eight to ten minutes. Then followed a sinusitis operation which lasted three minutes.
>
> There was a group of twenty persons, my neighbours, who witnessed the operations. They were so impressed that they tried to inform their friends and relatives. At seven p.m. there were more than three hundred people who came to see Tony. That night, Tony had to work, performing his operations, until up to two a.m.
>
> Next day, March 10, at about nine a.m., while Tony was

busy operating on some patients, the two specialist doctors of the Philippine Packing Corporation, and one nun who is in charge of the hospital, arrived and were able to see Tony's operations. They were all impressed by Tony's supernatural power.

After five days stay in Mindanao, Tony left for Manila because he had to make some healings and operations in Baguio, two hundred and fifty kilometres from Manila.

Mr. Gines and I were left behind for two weeks because we were intending to make a little investment in tomato farming. With God's help, I have planted ten acres of tomatoes.

Mr. Belk, may I tell you frankly that everything Tony does in his surgical operations, when his supernatural power is within him, I believe. It is a God-given gift to Tony and denying the power given to him is like denying God's existence and power. In fact, my belief in the existence of God was strengthened when I saw Tony's operations for the past two years. Otherwise I would not waste my precious time, going and joining Tony during his travels, operating on and healing people of all walks of life. My joining Tony is a guarantee of my faith and confidence in him.

Mr. Belk, you are indeed very generous and kind to us. Your lavish investments, in seeking the truth of the mysteries in this world, are second to none. When you were with us you made so much sacrifice. I hope Tony will be joining you to show, as you told me, Tony's power to your dear mother, brothers and sisters. We are looking forward to the time when we can come and visit your wonderful country and see Mr. Harold Sherman, Dr. Wanderman, and your kind friends who are sympathetic to the cause of science.

Mr. Belk, if there is any impediment to Tony's coming to the United States, it is Attorney Gines. He was trying to convince me that all Tony has is not true. That was the last time when I was in Manila, April to May. How can he deny now, after he has explained to the whole group of Americans, who come and go to Tony? I am in a quandary how he could reconcile or take back his words after he has told all about Tony's *supernatural* power.

In fact, his *sister*, who was at the verge of death because of advanced tumour in her uterus, was operated on and healed by Tony. The sister is now fine and healthy.

Be informed that only death can part me from Tony. . . .

With regards to Tony's plan to build a house in Baguio, it is indeed true. Tony was able to help a patient in Baguio, who is well to do and deals in real estate. Mr. Carino, an Igorot or native of Baguio, had an alimentary anus case from which he had suffered for the past forty years. A very serious case, and Tony helped him. Mr. Carino gave him a two thousand square metres plot to put up a little clinic in Baguio. When I was with Tony last May, I helped him have the papers photostated in the studio of Benjamin Rillera, my brother-in-law.

Please inform me of your plans about Tony's coming to the States so that in some way I may be able to be of service to you. . . . While Tony and Mr. Gines are not now on good speaking terms, please feel free to ask me anything within my capacity to help and do, during your work on Tony's life history.

The next communication, received by Belk, from Ulpiano Guiang, casts more light on these human contradictions:

About Mr. Gines. I met him at the Philippine Veterans Administration some few weeks back, and asked him why I did not see him at Tony's place with Mr. Pulido. I know that Mr. Gines was the adviser of Tony and Pulido, who introduced me to Tony, and who has been his confidential assistant. I have not yet talked with Mr. Pulido, but Mr. Gines told me he is not connected with Tony or Pulido any more. I asked Mr. Gines the reason for this. He related to me that you sent Tony a cheque which Tony did not report to his adviser. He said he had been protecting Tony for many years now, but on recent money matters he had not referred to him. Tony now has a new automobile, which I have only learned, first, from Mr. Gines, and then have seen for myself. With such information from Mr. Gines, it is evident that the friction is over money matters.

As you know, I have done all possible to investigate, find results and get records on all operations. Specifically, I have visited many clients in their respective homes at my own expense, got samples of their medicines, and showed these to professsional physicians. Two or three times I had to visit some of the patients, but found impressive healings, out of Tony's knowledge. Such was my way of investigating the truth. I know the stand of Tony against the medical profession. I have

some evidence about his healings in surgery and other healings, which are impressive up to now.

Now, if there are whispers about magic or trickery in Tony's healings or operations, it must be from other sources out of my sight. I brought many patients—among my relatives and friends—to Tony for operations and invited some professionals to observe his operations before they submitted themselves. But among my clients only a few had minor complaints. I also heard of some Filipino healers who made substitutions in their operations. Such may be true, but I never witnessed one in Tony's work in my presence. Mr. Ciampi knew I was inquisitive on all points, but in our mortal sight I have not seen one so far.

If there was some trickery in Tony's operations I did not see it. But why did Tony refuse to bring me to Baguio and why does Tony refuse my getting addresses of his patients? However, since Mr. Ciampi left for home, I only had a few chances of visiting Tony and I do not know what has happened. . . .

I am a Filipino. I know more about Tony with regard to his healings because it was through you that I had to investigate. So I had to dedicate myself for days. I brought to him, as I have reported, many relatives and friends for operations and treatments. In the event that I could discover any trickery—magic or anomalous treatments or operations, either from other parties, not my friends or relatives—*I will be the first person who will file charges against Tony*. I have records of all persons among relatives and friends who were operated on by him.

I am sincere and honest in my findings and have them thoroughly investigated and verified. If there were trickery or magic out of my sight, I have no evidence, so I think it will be improper to make any conclusion.

When you see Mr. Ciampi, he may relate the circumstances. I made reports on all operations which we, Mr. Ciampi, Renee duBonnet and I, actually saw. I made secret records of all their addresses and gave them to her. If she could send me the names and addresses of the persons in such records, I can go myself and check on them, make them sign and find results. I told them this after each operation. I have no records on such operations other than the ones in her notebook. Most of the patients reside outside Manila—some in the provinces, so far as I can remember. There were pictures taken corresponding to the operations.

If you want me to finalise these reports, I will have to call on the patients. Even if we have the pictures they cannot be identified, unless we have the signatures and short histories from the patients themselves.

You know, Mr. Belk, when you and Mr. Sherman were here, there was jealousy and friction about me making independent investigations. Mr. Gines and Pulido restricted taking addresses of the patients because Pulido told me, at the time, that such was the cause of Tony being arrested by the authorities some years ago. Mr. Gines also knew this.

Why do they (Mr. Ciampi and Renee duBonnet) evade revealing the complete identity of the patients? Are they afraid, or do they fear for any eventual prosecution? If such accusations are correct, why do they make restrictions?

No one could blame us if we relate actual facts of what we saw, we touched, we smelled. If Tony threw sand on our mortal eyes, it must be magical; but we still insist, we really witnessed it. I hope you will know how sensitive I am in investigation. I am not a legitimate lawyer, but I know the technique in the proper detection of crimes, as I know the secret of psychology.

Tony Agpaoa, in his letter to Belk, replying to questions about the new home, had this to say:

I was able to buy a lot in Baguio City, through instalments, payable within ten years. A building is not yet erected as I am trying to get a loan for that purpose.

Tony then reported that his wife, Lucy, had left for the States, with an aunt, Mrs. Adelina Bagalot, to visit relatives and to settle an important business matter.

With respect to Sammy Gines and Victor Pulido, he wrote:

Mr. Gines and Pulido are still counted by me as friends, but to others they say we are enemies. I repeat—they're still friends to me.

In answer to the charges of fraud, Tony said:

To every individual, there is always something not good to others, so that problems and misunderstandings with others come and go. So far, I have not done anything against medical authorities, or any breaking of laws.

Regarding my opinion about Mr. Ciampi and Renee du-Bonnet. I have nothing to say about them. I hope they were completely satisfied with all our entertainment bestowed on them. I'm praying hard that all these films taken here will be of great success there. . . .

As of this day, I cannot tell you of my plans for this year, 1966. I might be able to reveal things when I am very sure of my plans for the future. I hope I will meet you soon.

It was not long after receipt of this letter and these statements from Tony that Henry and I began to have forwarded to us copies of letters. These Tony had written to former American patients who had gone to the Philippines to be operated upon by him, or had written to him asking if he was coming to the States, or if he could do anything for them, should they visit him in the Islands. The heading on the typed letters was, "Advance Spiritual Research Foundation" and the founder was listed as Antonio C. Agpaoa.

The form letter read as follows, except for the fill-in of the individual name:

July 6, 1966

Dear Mr. Giampula:

On the 20th of this month, I am coming over to the U.S.A. with my wife. I thank God to be thus enabled to see you soon in person. I will, with deep gratitude, appreciate it if you will sponsor this forthcoming trip of mine.

Specially from the financial standpoint, your doing so will lift an enormous burden from my mind and shoulders.

You will know that this has been the chief impediment that has prevented my coming earlier, but with your help this will no longer be an obstacle.

May I have the great pleasure, dear friend, of hearing from you shortly and seeing you soon so that I may, with God's guidance, be of help to you, in whatever measure He deems it fit to bestow?

With anxious expectancy, I await the moment when we will come face to face in a warm handclasp in a spirit of honourable friendship and sincere brotherhood.

Very sincerely
(signed) Tony Agpaoa

A postscript was then added, apparently printed, in ink, in his own hand:

> I assure you I'll knock at your door one of these days. I'll appreciate it if you still remember me, or call you by phone as soon as I have arrived.

The evidence of these letters (and Henry and I now have well over half-a-dozen), is deeply disquieting. It is so unlike the Tony Agpaoa we saw and knew in the Philippines, a little more than six months ago.

As I complete this chapter and put the finishing touches on this manuscript preparatory to turning it over to my American publishers, the date is August 7, 1966. What will be revealed after this book goes to press is anyone's guess, but you can pretty well predicate it upon a study of the running account you have read here.

There is a rumour that Tony is now in the United States. If so, he certainly did not come with his wife, Lucy, because she preceded him. After going to the West Coast, she visited Henry in Miami, for two days. He learned nothing from her of any consequence. She does not speak English well. Nor did she say that Tony was meeting her in this country.

When conditions were right for Tony to have come to the United States, he did not need to solicit money. Robert Swope, who founded the Swope Research Foundation, but who would not associate, in any way, with the Belk Psychic Research Foundation or the ESP Research Associates Foundation, had promised to finance Tony, at the proper time. Tony had similar promises from Belk and myself, on behalf of our foundations. We were all generally agreed, if Tony ever came to the United States, it should be under scientifically-sponsored conditions, acceptable to medical authorities; that no fees for operations should be promised or paid; that whatever demonstrations of his "operative" powers he might undertake, they would be for observational and experimental purposes only.

Tony had thoroughly understood this at the time we were all in the Philippines. Why he should go counter to this plan, if he

has, and risk possible prosecution and discredit, is beyond conjecture at this point.

I find I have indeed been proved a prophet when I stated in this book's Preface, ". . . I am left with the feeling that we are not even well into the first act of what is yet to happen and yet to be discovered."

Perhaps Tolentino's letter to Henry, in answer to his queries, will add still a little more light. It was written on July 20, 1966:

> The first time Mr. Ciampi came, he tried to scare us and began to criticise us. We are just like the Rock of Gibraltar that cannot be moved. Later, he and Renee duBonnet became very friendly.
>
> They were wrong when they reported to you that I had a heart attack, for it was nothing but a very mild stroke. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, that is working through our mediums, I am sane and sound and have gained more weight.
>
> Mr. Ciampi criticised the spirits that command the mediums, as to this or that, concluding that such spirits in command are not high spirits. I let go whatever he said, but the spirit through Renee duBonnet, supposed to be in trance, did not command the medium. It was the medium who commanded God, saying, "God, heal this man!"
>
> Terte's technique is very little or no blood; Mercado's is plenty of blood. Blanche's technique is still different. He does not touch the body of the patient, but takes hold of the index finger of someone near the operating table and, with a swift motion about five inches above the abdomen, there is a slit and blood. After three days, the wound heals. I have seen Blanche operate on several patients and always with the same technique. This was recorded in Mr. Ciampi's film as you will see.
>
> What an irony that several patients who paid Tony a great sum of money were not healed after all but came to Blanche to be healed by him.
>
> I guess your article on "Dr. Tony" misled the public. What you heard is true: that Tony has collected lots of money via the post.

It must be conceded that Tolentino has consistently stated, from the beginning, that Tony Agpaoa, since leaving the

membership of the Espiritista organisation, has commercialised his "powers." He has not said that Tony was not performing genuine work. He had credited Tony, as have others, with having possessed remarkable healing powers in his earlier years before he came under what the Spiritists call "material or evil influences."

And now to top this all off, a special delivery airmail letter from the Philippines has just reached me from Samuel Gines, the man who was formerly associated as an adviser to Tony. In keeping with my policy of withholding nothing that is pertinent and of value to this investigation, I present it here:

> I have wanted to write to you for the past few months, but my work keeps me away from home. I could not keep it any longer because I feel it a moral duty to let you know what I have discovered lately about Tony.
>
> You will be shocked to know that Tony is not the gifted man we all believed him to be. It took me about two years, since I came to know him, to learn about it. That is the very reason why I was very eager for his coming, through your foundation to the United States, so that Tony would be under scientific observation . . .
>
> Now his wife is in the U.S. Tony will be coming soon or will be there before this note will reach you.
>
> I know you were preparing to write a book about Tony. It keeps me worried to know that a man of your standing will be involved in a thing which will not be supported by science.
>
> I do not wish to be believed by you but just to warn you so that you can study Tony better. If he still insists that he has the power, ask him to make just one operation of the many he performed here. If he does, then subject him to rigid test. If he refuses, then this will prove my point.

This is the testimony of a man who was intimately connected with Tony at the time I was in the Philippines, and with whose name and character you are already familiar from having read this report. Gines impressed me then as an honourable person, a man of integrity. When I first met him, his concern over Tony and Belk's attitude toward him had appeared to be deep and

genuine. I must conclude that his concern is no less deep and genuine now.

What am I then to think? What are you, the reader, to think? We have explored this whole mysterious and conflicting subject of faith and spirit healing together. You have been given a frank, truthful picture of human reactions throughout, from the start to this current point of unfoldment. It has been an inspiring picture in parts; a distressing, unhappy one, in other areas. But always it has been challenging, leaving these many questions unanswered, as they still are today:

1. If (and this is only an assumption for the purpose of speculation) fraud should subsequently and generally be proved, with respect to Tony and other purported performers of "psychic surgery," how can they have fooled so many thousands of people, so many years, without widespread detection, condemnation and prosecution by civil as well as medical authorities?
2. How can there exist so many men, women and children, not alone Filipinos, who steadfastly testify that they have been "healed" by "psychic surgery"?
3. Can it be explained on the basis, as some are now suggesting, that these were "psychosomatic healings"; that the patients had nothing organically wrong and had their own healing powers activated by a removal of their fears and the exercise of faith?
4. How does this affect verified cases of patients, with medical records of past operations and actual physical conditions, who went to the Islands and returned with no further medical evidence of these existing conditions?
5. How can so many competent and authoritative witnesses, doctors and surgeons included, as well as physicists and others, have seen these "operations" without having detected sleight-of-hand and other fraudulent practices? Are all these "psychic surgeons" so clever in their ability to conjure and to employ various forms of magic?
6. Are the inspired words of the religion of the Spiritists

simply an opiate for mesmerising the sincere and dedicated but, at the same time, deluded followers?

7. Is fraud, as has often been the case in areas of psychic phenomena, been mixed with genuine healing practices, under either "spiritistically" evil or humanly designing influences?

With these and other vital questions still unanswered I do not recommend, nor have I recommended, any person to seek faith and spirit healings from those who purport to perform "psychic surgery" operations. At present it is not worth the time, the money and the risk to go to the Philippines, or to submit to the same kind of operations should anyone like Tony visit this country. Because of the medical laws, it is most unlikely that Tony would be permitted to "operate" in the United States. He and anyone associated with him in such a venture might well be arrested and convicted, were any attempt made to treat patients.

* * *

The presses have been held for me now to add this latest development. It does not make pretty telling. It is an account just brought back to me from the Philippines by Bobbie Gironda, who felt that she must go there, on her own, at all costs, and see for herself what was taking place. She called on the Tolentinos and met a number of their Spiritist healers, among them Terte, Blanche, Mercado and Ading, but she was unable to see Tony Agpaoa. She was impressed by some, not so much by others. She did, however, meet a number of American patients and also a prominent American scientist, researcher in parapsychology, who was studying the psychic surgery phenomenon. She then became witness to a tragic happening, the first of its kind which has been reported, but not to be the last unless due caution is henceforth taken.

What Bobbie experienced, I requested her to tell in her own words:

In August, 1966, an American girl died in Manila. She did

not die as a result of "psychic surgery" but rather because she was too ill to make the trip. The Spiritist healings could not help her. The long hours of travel had taken the last of her little endurance.

I was closely involved with this girl and her mother. I have written an account of this in detail as a warning to others who have been led to believe that God Himself is standing by the side of each "psychic surgeon" and guaranteed miracles will result after a pilgrimage of faith is made to the Philippines. The mother of the dead girl had given me verbal permission to tell her daughter's story. However, at the last moment, even as the manuscript for this book was at the printer's, the desolate mother advised she did not wish one word concerning her daughter to be printed.

I regret that many readers, in desperately poor health and going out on a financial limb to make the trip, do not realise the tragic circumstances which might await them. I can only tell those same persons that you certainly might be helped, but you must also weigh what you might stand to lose. The decision must be yours alone.

There is an appalling situation in Manila now because the exploiters have come and they are, in effect, selling tickets to the side-show of psychic phenomena. Sadly enough they are Americans. Uninformed as to how these "surgeries" occur and what are their limitations, they are arranging and soliciting conducted tours for persons desiring an operation. An advance operation fee may or may not be included in the package deal. "So what's wrong with that?" these so-called authorities will answer in defence of themselves. "We haven't promised anything!"

No indeed you haven't, but by your silence you are leading others to believe that their faith in God is what is being tested and failure is somehow a direct result of lack of faith. You are not blameless, because the moral responsibility of knowing the detailed physical condition of each person on your tour, their psychological response to possible failure and what financial sacrifices they made for this long journey, is on your soul and conscience.

There are heads of research organisations offering substantial inducements to certain "surgeons," over and under the table,

to get them to come to their individual foundations for further study. In some cases they are hoping to scoop the other research foundations by having the first "psychic surgeon" under their authority. It is my feeling, however, that until these foundations are scientifically informed enough to understand this phenomena in terms of physics and the various electromagnetic energies employed, and are willing to join with other learned men for a collective study, they will not be able to further the truth because they may not be able to recognise the healing principles involved.

I wonder if the dedicated Spiritists, those not fascinated with the notoriety and free money given them by the Americans, won't react eventually in the same manner that the Polynesian healer, the Kahuna, did when the first missionary told him that he really could not heal in that manner and if he could, he must be in league with the Devil. The Kahunas drifted back into the isolated areas to continue their "simple" existence without "civilised" interference. Now the Espiritistas are breaking off from the parent organisation to form small groups of their own. Is this to return to their former way of life before the Americans noticed them? Their spiritual concepts, which are a way of life, are the very force which initiated their first gifts of healing.

I was at the home of Guillermo Tolentino the Wednesday evening of August 10, to watch "operations" performed by the invited "surgeon." A year ago, this living room would have been filled with hundreds of poor Filipino peasants, praying for God's help to end their suffering. On this night, there were only twenty or so persons there: Americans, Australians, Europeans and one well-dressed native family. Many cameras and notebooks were in readiness to document the ensuing "operations." Presently Blanche appeared with his assistants, Candido Bawanan and Ismael Sugue. Blanche stepped to the operating table. As a short prayer was given he held his extended hands cupped, to receive into them God's returning blessing of healing power.

Then he nodded that the first patient might approach the table. An American girl stepped forward and was treated for nose polyps. As she left the table, Blanche nodded that the next patient might come forward. A heavy silence ensued, for there were no more patients but only the curious onlookers, most of

them coming to watch a spectacle. The people soon dispersed into little conversation groups. Blanche and his assistants boarded a rickety bus, one of the three which would, after several hours, return them to Pasig, from which they had come.

There may be some magician work performed along with the authentic operations, but a reason you may not have considered is behind it. The extreme pressure from the curious, the conflicting scientists, the exploiters with their money in hand, the writers and their photographers, not to mention the responsibility to the patients, creates a complicated situation for these people. Suddenly they have been thrust into the spotlight to have to prove what they know they can do. But this tense atmosphere creates nervousness and anxiety. Emotions like these shut down the very mental channels the surgeons *need* to utilise the available charge energy by which they heal.

They are men, not gods. And as fallible human beings as we are, and being child-like at that in their efforts to please this sophisticated audience now waiting for the show to begin, they may very well resort to some trickery at first. But do not be fooled into thinking all these "surgeries" are improvised. They are not and this can be proven.

After my experience in the Philippines I would urge you, the reader, to look to the universal realities and laws that God has given us for a better world. The areas of telepathy and electromagnetic energies hold the answers. Open-minded scientists must be encouraged to learn to duplicate these painless operations without scalpels for the benefit of all humanity and to begin and complete this needed research as promptly as humanly possible.

At the present, earnest and competent researchers are investigating this vast complexity. But it is this writer's wish to urge caution on all those whose physical disability might be so severe that the trip alone might prove fatal. Do not lose your faith, but do not throw caution to the four winds. I believe it will be shown in time that these "psychic surgeons" are using a form of concentrated energy that God has given to all mankind. Indeed, the power is a reality, and these spiritually-devoted men are specialists in demonstrating this in astounding surgeries. Yet they, themselves, are unable to tell you how it is accomplished. A distinction must now be made between surgery and healing.

> It is therefore up to each individual to evaluate the research done to date and, I hope, wait until more is forthcoming before starting on that very long journey to Manila. A more specific understanding of each surgeon's range of powers will then have been analysed.

Bobbie Gironda has rendered a monumental service to all afflicted people who may now be considering a trip to the Philippines. It is also possible that the death of this young woman, to whom she refers, may save the lives of others who might be tempted, as a last hope, to make this long, wearing and costly journey without sufficient medical assurance that they can be helped.

One of the "guided healing tours" similar to those to which Bobbie referred, was organised and conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Bernard Jensen, who head the Hidden Valley Health Ranch, near Escondido, California. They took a party of Americans, with a wide variety of ills, to the Philippines, accompanied by Nelson Decker. Both Decker and Jensen are chiropractors.

Tony Agpaoa, whom it has now been established was in the States during part of July and August, returned to the Philippines with his wife, Lucy, so that he could operate on the various members of this group. He followed them on another plane, so Dr. Jensen informed me, and met them privately in Baguio City, instead of Manila, where a home was provided for the "psychic surgery" to be performed therein.

While in the States, it was reported, Tony conferred with Robert Swope, head of the Swope Research Foundation, but he did not contact Belk or me. Tony's failure to see him is understandable, despite Belk's extensive financial help, because Henry had been so outspoken against any suggestion of faking, and had brought the subject up to Lucy when he had seen her. Possibly the fact that I had gone to the Philippines with Henry is the reason Tony made no effort to see me. Again, I am simply reporting what has actually happened. But Henry has understood from the beginning that my views and actions are completely independent from his, that his public and private statements do not, at any time, imply I am necessarily in agreement.

Tony also knew this to be true. It is, therefore, unusual that he would not have sought to see me, on his visit to the States, since I was authorised to write about him, and since he told an American woman, Geraldine Saunders, on July 6 in the Philippines, that he was "going to the States to see Harold Sherman."

It so happens that Mrs. Saunders, some months previous, had seen the Swope colour motion pictures of Tony's operations, in the company of Sydney Omarr, a noted astrologer, and had been impressed. She had no inkling at the time that she would ever visit the Philippines, but a sudden opportunity arose for her to join an entertainment unit for a trip to military bases in Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Arriving in the Philippines, she decided to take advantage of this seemingly providential chance to observe and to check on the "psychic surgery" phenomenon. Her first visit was to Tolentino's home, headquarters of the Spiritist movement. There she found Terte conducting an "operating" session.

Mrs. Saunders suffered from a physical condition caused by a dropped right kidney. This brought on urological difficulties and made it necessary for her to take antibiotics for years, to avoid serious infection.

Finally, some ten years ago, Dr. Belt, now head of the Urological Association, operated on her and sewed the right kidney to her ribs, from the back. This operation was performed in the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles.

In the Philippines, strangely enough, Mrs. Saunders was suffering from severe stomach cramps. She mentioned her distress to Tolentino, while they were watching Terte operate under bright floodlights set up by a visiting oral surgeon from South America who was taking colour motion pictures.

At an opportune moment, Tolentino spoke to Terte in Tagalog about Mrs. Saunders. He motioned to his women attendants to bring her forward. Almost before she realised what was taking place, she was piloted to the operating table and laid upon it. The women "nurses" pulled her blouse up and her slip down and Terte placed his hands on her abdomen.

He began massaging it and, speaking in his native Tagalog (he does not speak English well) said to those present, "This woman has a kink in her intestines," which he was straightening out.

Almost miraculously the pain stopped—and has not returned. But what amazed Mrs. Saunders even more was Terte's further statement, "She has also a misplaced kidney." This was something, Mrs. Saunders said, she had mentioned to no one. There was no way Terte could have physically detected the surgery that had been done years before, through contact with the front part of her body!

"How he sensed this condition, I cannot explain," she said. "This really rocked me."

The experience with Terte made Mrs. Saunders eager to meet Tony Agpaoa and to see him operate. When Blake Smith, head of the entertainment organisation at Clark Air Force Base, called for her at her hotel, she asked if Quezon City, where Tony lived, might be on the way. Assured that it was, she asked Smith if he would drive her to Tony's home en route. If they could locate Tony, would Smith like to see him do some of his "bare hand surgery"? Smith, an accomplished magician, expressed scepticism, and said, "Sure, I'd like to see it, but it has to be a trick."

They found Tony at home, but he was resting between patients and none was available for demonstration purposes. Mrs. Saunders told him she had seen Bob Swope's movies of his work and would like to watch him perform in person, if at all possible.

Tony expressed regret, explaining that he took patients as they came. Since there were not any at the moment, perhaps she would like to see him cut a three-inch width of adhesive tape. This he did with the greatest of ease. About this time, two women arrived by car and a young girl, between eighteen and twenty, was introduced to Tony. She had been having two periods a month and pain in her abdomen.

Tony placed her on the table in his operating room and invited Smith and Mrs. Saunders to watch. He pulled the

girl's dress up, placed a blanket over her lower extremities to protect her modesty, and patted the abdomen with the flat of his hand, a characteristic gesture. A quick movement with the side of his right hand and the abdomen apparently opened. He brought the uterus out and asked both Mrs. Saunders and Smith to feel it. Then he showed them an area where there appeared to be a tumour. This he severed with his fingers and placed on a wad of cotton. Next he slipped the uterus back in place and, holding the incision open, said to his two onlookers, "Watch! I am going to count—one . . . two . . . three!"

As he released his retracting hold on the opening, it closed instantly, according to Mrs. Saunders. Tony, smiling, wiped away the blood—and there was no scar!

Magician Smith was baffled, so was Mrs. Saunders. Tony posed willingly for pictures (he never objects to photographs of any kind) and the two went on their way. When Smith tried to tell others at Clark Air Force Base what they had witnessed, he was greeted with scoffing laughter. They must have been "seeing things."

"We *did*!" Mrs. Saunders told them. "But it was useless to try to convince anyone."

Let me return now to Dr. Jensen and his party of thirty-two American patients. I was invited to his Hidden Valley Health Ranch, and was privileged to see the colour motion pictures he had taken of each of their operations. Following their presentation, I let him see the pictures Belk and I had had taken, also of Tony's operations. They looked remarkably similar, except that Dr. Jensen had more of them. He also had a "pan camera" shot of an apparently happy and smiling group of patients, taken after they had all been operated upon. They were up and moving about as though nothing had happened.

"Did you make pathological tests of organs or tissues removed from the bodies of any of them?" I asked.

"No," said Dr. Jensen. "It was obvious that the operations were genuine."

"Do you have the past medical case histories of everyone

who went with you for checking? Have you checked up on their conditions since your return a few days ago?"

"No," said Dr. Jensen, "I intend to do this but, so far, I have been too busy."

It is true that he had some fifty to seventy-five men and women, all patients at the Hidden Valley Health Ranch, needing attention, and work had piled up during his absence.

"How many patients did Tony operate on a day?" I asked.

"As many as he could. He operated from ten in the morning until ten at night the first day. He took one after another."

"Were all the patients satisfied?" was my next question, "and did they all benefit?"

"So far as I know," he said. "We took three announced sceptics with us and they returned sceptics. Aside from that, I believe there were few complaints or expressions of doubt. Most of the patients and doctor friends I took with me were very happy with the trip. Most of them reported good results from their operations and treatments by Tony. Of course, patients should not expect complete cures the moment an operation is over. There have been many cases where patients have continued to improve for some time."

"Did you and Mrs. Jensen submit to any operations?" I asked.

"Yes, we had our operations in private."

"What were they?" I asked.

"They were of a personal nature. I would rather not say."

"Do you feel you have been cured of whatever your ailments were?"

Dr. Jensen and his wife exchanged consulting glances. "I would say we are better," he answered.

"Were the patients permitted to witness each other's operations?"

"Yes, they all saw what Tony did to them and this gave them greater confidence. A number used mirrors to watch their own operations."

"I understand that the patients all gave Tony donations of a hundred dollars (about £35) or so?"

"Yes, some of them were so pleased they gave more than that —as much as five hundred dollars (about £175)."

"Did Nelson Decker perform any operations himself, as he claimed to be able to do in Tony's presence?"

"No, but he assisted Tony in some of them."

"How would you describe the operations Tony performs?"

"I consider it strictly a spiritual type of healing," replied Dr. Jensen, "where tissue is massaged beneath his hands to a proper position and the elimination of that which could cause obstructions and interference with blood supply or nerve supply. It is not a matter of removing an organ, but a means of removing material to leave the organ cleansed after the treatment. I can only report this as I see it, rather than attempting to explain all that Tony tries to accomplish or what he is doing."

"What is your overall impression of 'psychic surgery,' now that you and Nelson Decker have taken this group to the Philippines and witnessed Tony in action?"

"I think it is very remarkable. However, I would say that what Tony does is not a cure-all. There are some people he cannot help. I think it is too early to make a final judgment on many of these cases.

"*Nevertheless, I am sufficiently impressed with results obtained by the first group visit to Tony that I am taking a second group for operations and treatments in early November.*"

I believe Doctor and Mrs. Jensen to be sincere people. He tells me he has written a book, illustrated by his pictures, reporting on the American case histories. This should throw further light on the still mystifying practice of "psychic surgery."

The typesetting of *my* book has now been delayed, which allows me to include another letter I received from Samuel Gines in further elucidation of his charges that Tony is employing trickery in his operations. The significant portions of his letter are reproduced herewith:

> I realised too late that Tony is a master magician. . . . For almost two years I looked upon Tony as a man next to God and venerated him so highly that I was afraid to raise a doubt on

anything he does. I, with the questioning mind, was also fooled like the rest. The moment I was sure, I left him. That was the time when Mr. Belk was sending him money. . . .

I stayed with Tony for about two years. I wasted this whole period, without earning, devoting all my time to Tony. . . . I realise your predicament. Like me, you openly and sincerely promoted the works of Tony in the U.S. Now, how shall we pull back those words of ours?

Recently, I have heard Decker was here with thirty-two American patients. Mr. Ricks and Dr. Stevenson, who are here to see Tony, informed me. Now Mr. Ricks and Dr. Stevenson cannot see Tony here. He has left his old place. According to them, Mr. Decker accompanied the thirty-two patients to Baguio City, where Tony performed the operations. He was paid by the American patients.

As you know, I and Vic Pulido left our normal work during our stay with Tony. If you wish any further information, we will be only too glad to be of help to you.

Your friends,
Sammy and Vic.

It is interesting to observe that Victor Pulido, who had formerly expressed faith in Tony and was disturbed that Gines raised any doubts, has now joined with him. I had heard that Dr. Ian Stevenson, mentioned earlier in this book, as well as Bernard Ricks, had gone to the Philippines on an investigation of their own. I have the highest respect for my friend, Dr. Stevenson, as one of the top researchers in parapsychology today. His own evaluation of his first-hand observations will deserve the most serious consideration.

As this book has been understandably delayed in publication due to late developments, it has given me opportunity to receive the report of a prominent Californian woman, just returned from a trip to the Philippines, with her equally prominent husband. She submitted to an operation by Tony for a prolapsed uterus. The operation was not successful, but in spite of this, the woman has the highest praise for Tony. Because she is so well known, she has requested I withhold her name,

although granting me permission to quote from her letter to me:

Tony is suspicious of everyone now, and understandably so. . . . He is terrified of the many factions wanting to capitalise on his talent, and let's face it, he has a miraculous talent. I learned that he lived like a small animal for two years as a child, alone, unwanted, at an age when children must have a father to develop normally. He never had mother or father love, so had to depend on the "control" (this higher intelligence) that apparently had him in his power from the time he was born. I weep when I think of his heartbreaking childhood. Perhaps it is too much to expect him to recognise a person who is sincere and honest and not out to gain at his expense. There are many leeches in the United States, and he knows it.

I am very surprised that you should ask me if I am sure he made the incision, did it heal immediately, and was it all an illusion (the accusations many sceptics have been making). You witnessed many operations yourself in Manila.

He made two incisions. The first hurt considerably when he broke through, due to scar tissue from an appendectomy. I am a *sensitive*, hence my tissue and muscular structure is much more sensitive than an ordinary person's.

Tony came into the room (only my husband and Tony's aunt were there as I would not allow the other people to enter) and immediately threw the chunk of cotton, soaking in water, on my lower abdomen. He removed it, closed his eyes for a second as if praying, and then went right to work. He never looked at me, because I was watching him closely as was my husband.

He left the first incision open when he made the other one on the left side. My husband had a photo-flash camera and got excellent pictures. I told Tony to keep the blood flow down as it was *not necessary*, and not to spend so much time *enjoying* the sight. His aunt told him likewise to cut down on the flow of blood. I could feel the blood running down on my body.

Tony insisted on getting a huge mirror for me to view my own insides. He held up my severed fallopian tubes (which he tied) for me to enjoy seeing! This really got me. I told him to hurry as I wanted the operation over with. I had witnessed

three other operations before mine; one in which he thrashed around in the abdominal cavity of an elderly woman so furiously that the blood flew over in clots. (There were a dozen people in the room.) This was Tony's "control" *enjoying* the blood!

At the end of his work, he said (characteristically), "Now I will count to three and close the opening." He did that and drew his hand swiftly over my gaping interior. It was instantly whole, but bloody. The nephew came in, Tony left immediately and the former washed me off. I had blood on my slip and blouse, which washed out easily at the hotel.

I noticed a great weakness of the abdominal wall and muscles for a month afterwards, and of course the uterus was much more dropped, was out all of the time. I stayed in my hotel room for two days and had my meals sent up. Tony came one day and gave me a treatment with his "magic oil," and another night came for dinner. He brought us many gifts. He realised then the failure of the surgery and said he would give me treatments.

I did get into a slight case of shock following the surgery. I had chills. My knees shook terribly. They took me into his room, where I lay on a cot with a warm blanket over me, and drank hot coffee. Then they had me eat papayas, mangoes and sour beans, all of which tasted delicious. His nephew drove me to the hotel, but we toured Manila on the way. Tony wanted to take us to Baguio the next day, in fact he came to the hotel for that purpose, but I was not in any mood to cope with the many curves and bumpy road late at night. Tony and Terte gave a demonstration of thirteen operations for the Spiritists there. They alternated in performing.

As you know, Tony's arm, from the elbow down, is under complete control of his "Master" ("Protector", as Tony calls this intelligence). It tires, and that is when he stops. He said he keeps only one-fifth of what he is given for himself. He gives away to the poor and needy.

To say that hypnotism or illusion enters into Tony's work is naïve. I can't be hypnotised. My husband, a sceptic, and a very observant person, watched the proceedings closely. Tony's skill seemed as natural to him as to me. There was no time to do anything in advance of my surgery, as he entered the room and in two seconds was opening the abdominal wall.

I went to the top gynaecologist-surgeon in my city, after returning home, for examination. He said the tissue-tone was so poor he would not attempt the scheduled surgery. He is giving me hormones to build up the area. It will take a year. He said that surgery by him now would prove unsuccessful. Before the trip, another top surgeon said I could wait, I didn't need surgery at this time.

Personally, I think Tony can *remove* but not *repair*. Yet he refused to remove the uterus which I had wanted done. He also would not even examine my husband for a gall-bladder condition.

Tony's self-esteem is mounting dangerously. He ridicules all except himself. No one is so great. I watched Jeane Dixon on TV last evening, and have read the book about her, *A Gift of Prophecy*. Her humility and complete dependence on God are her secrets of success. If Tony persists in his attitude, he will be destroyed in time. Life will see to that. I feel very sad about him.

The attention given him by Americans has turned his head, so perhaps we share in this destruction. I think his talent is fabulous, but unless he begins worshipping God instead of his "control," he is doomed, in my opinion. This is the law of the universe. None of us can be more than a channel, an instrument of God. Without Him, we build hills of sand.

This woman and her husband flew back to the States with Tony, spending two days with him in Hawaii. Tony told them that he was going to Yuma to see his Filipino friends, his aunt and his wife, and promised to let them know later when he could come to this woman's home and give her treatment to correct the failure of surgery. But he never telephoned or got in touch in any way.

Knowing, as I do, the demands on Tony, and the people who may have got to him, it is possible he became so engulfed as not to have been able to keep his promise. But it is interesting to note that a responsible American woman, upon whom Tony operated unsuccessfully, still commends him.

Now, since you must rightfully be wondering what Tony's reactions are to all this, here are his salient comments from a lengthy letter I have just received, breaking his long silence and

failure to contact me on his trip to the States. He offers no explanation for this, nor even mentions his trip to this country, but declares that my last letter had been delayed in reaching him until recently, since he had been moving around. I had asked him in a kindly but direct way to comment about the increasing allegations that were being made. He answers:

> You have observed me with others. I have been subjected to many tests. If it is trickery on my part, how come in the past seventeen years I have had no troubles? If other healers have tricks, or other methods, it is not my fault. I'm only concerned about myself.
>
> So many patients have been cured and what else could one say of this? In this world, I admit, I can't get all people to believe in me. There are always the pros and cons. Even Jesus, whom many accept as God come to earth, did miracles, but wasn't able to convince all people. And I am only a human being.
>
> Dr. Decker and Dr. Jensen were here with thirty-two people on August 7. Thirteen of them were doctors. They were all operated on. If you wish to know of my works, you may refer to them and the patients who underwent treatment.
>
> I know I am not doing any trick so my conscience is clear.

As you, the reader, can now see, after having vicariously gone through every experience with me, in the order in which each one happened, this investigation of faith and spirit healing in the Philippines has evolved into one of the great modern metaphysical mystery stories, with almost "cloak and dagger" overtones.

In the light of what has now been revealed, the charges and counter-charges, the claims and counter-claims, I suggest that you go back over the material presented in formulating your own deductions and opinions. Take Chapter 10, for example, recounting our "talk with Tony" and the impressive, yet mystifying, answers he gave us, under interrogation. Review the stories told by Nelson Decker of his experiences. He is today taking patients to Tony, in association with Dr. Jensen. Recall the statements made by Robert Swope, who formed a

foundation for the purpose of doing research on Tony. Remember, too, the report made by Dr. Motoyama, who conducted scientific tests on Tony. A letter just received from Dr. Motoyama states that he wishes to make several changes in his evaluations as the result of further study, but it is too late to include them in this edition. Consider also the personal experiences Belk and I have reported. Then, ponder the speculative theory of the top scientist, illustrating how Tony, *if genuine*, could be performing his "psychic surgery." And, of course, give thought to the case histories of American patients gathered by Bobbie Gironda. And so on and so on—the vast amount of pro and con material truthfully and accurately reported.

Certainly, if it is subsequently proved that this is all trickery, it will constitute one of the cleverest, most convincing performances of "spiritual" deception ever perpetrated. I repeat, how so many authoritative observers and many thousands of patients can have been completely fooled all these years would then be the greatest mystery of all. This would include Belk and myself, who have devoted a great amount to time and money in an all-out effort to separate the true from the false, to get the real low-down on "psychic surgery."

It is my hope, therefore, that this book may render a valuable service in protecting as well as informing the public—the countless people seeking healing of various ills. If it has been this difficult to cut through the existing practices and conditions in the Philippines, it would be almost impossible for the average man and woman to discover and isolate the genuine from the fraudulent. It has taken this kind of an effort, beset with every manner of frustration, human greed, wishful thinking, self-delusion and superstition to unearth what has herein been presented.

For me, it has been, as I have stated, "a great spiritual adventure," and, at the same time, a most trying, often disillusioning experience. As I look at the picture today, there is no definite black or white. The whole area is shaded and must remain so until more light has been added. As your reporter I have sought,

let me once more repeat, to recount my exact feelings and appraisals at the time of their happening, right up to the present moment. One's conclusions change as one continues to experience.

What are my thoughts as this book now finally goes to press?

Is what has been uncovered and observed worth investigating further?

Yes, very much so!

Is it possible that new healing methods may be proved and developed?

Yes, it is possible, but it will take time and study.

Until then – what?

Be assured that every exhaustive effort will be made to ascertain the truth and to make it known at the earliest possible moment.

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